Realizing The Garden City:

The Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda

Document 2
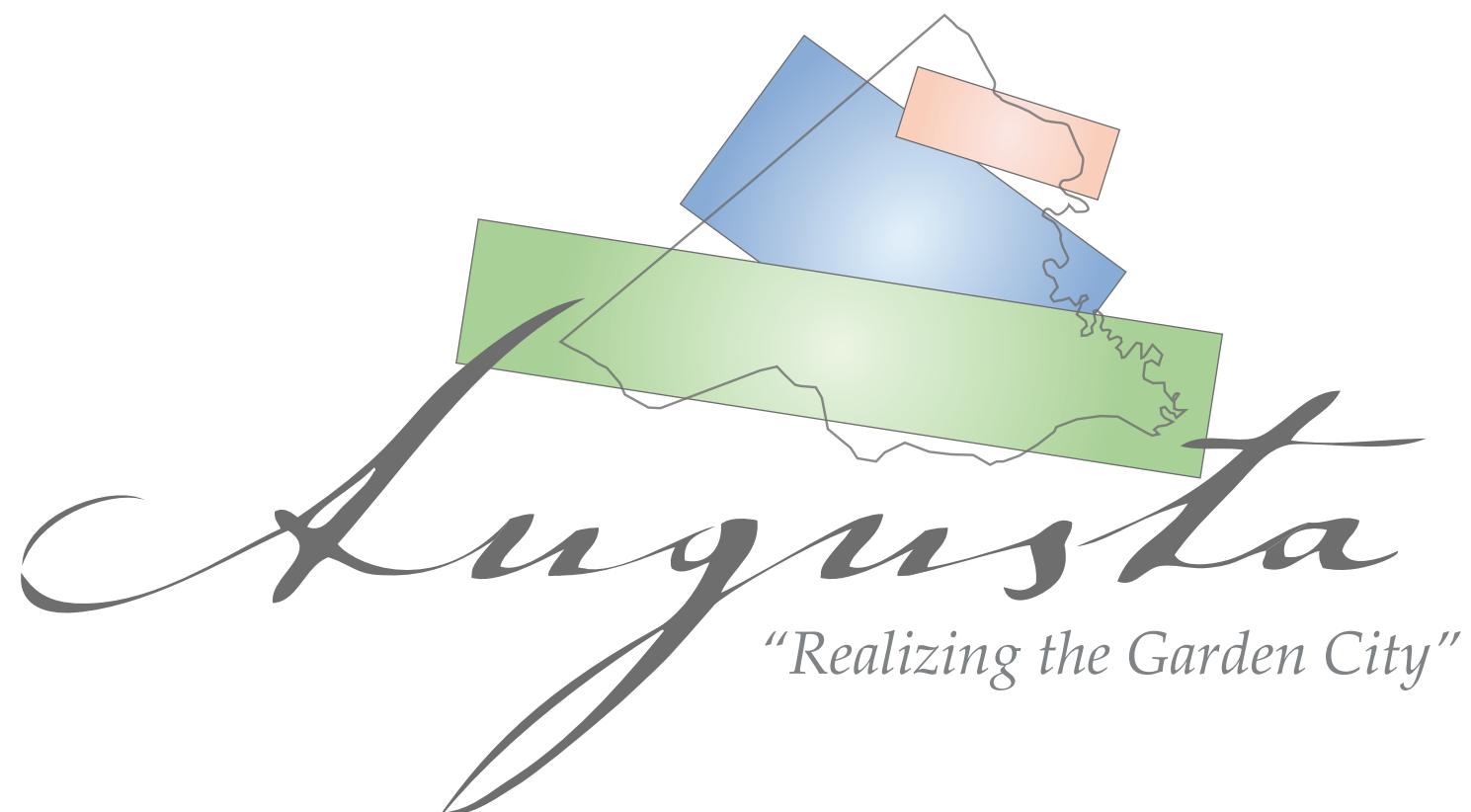
FINAL REPORT

October 14, 2010

prepared for
The City of Augusta, Georgia

by
ShieldsDESIGN LLC

with
Cranston Engineering Group
ICON Architecture Inc
The Woodhurst Partnership
Urban Partners

Augusta

"Realizing the Garden City"

Acknowledgements

This plan is prepared for the City of Augusta, GA. A Steering Committee of city leaders provided guidance in the development of the plan. The work was enriched through a Advisory Task Force of engaged local citizens, who have reviewed and commented throughout the work in progress. This plan was prepared at the direction of the City Commissioners who are listed below:

Mayor and City Commissioners

Deke Copenhaver, Mayor
Matt Aitken, District 1
Corey Johnson, District 2
Joe Bowles, District 3
Alvin Mason, District 4
Bill Lockett, District 5
Joe Jackson, District 6
Jerry Brigham, District 7
Jimmy Smith, District 8
J.R. Hatney, District 9
Don Grantham, District 10

Steering Committee

Deke Copenhaver, Mayor of Augusta; Paul DeCamp, City of Augusta Planner; Karen Nixon, Assistant to the Mayor; George Patty, Planner; Dennis Skelley, President of Augusta Tomorrow; Fred Russell, City Administrator; Al Mason, Mayor Pro Tem; Terry Elam, Chairman of this Agenda Advisory Task Force.

Advisory Task Force

Chaired by Terry D. Elam, the President of Augusta Technical College, the members of that Task Force are recognized at the end of this document.

A Word from the Team

We have been working with the City of Augusta on this Sustainable Development Agenda for the past sixteen months with a series of well-attended public meetings including dozens of one-on-one sessions, with frank, honest, and creative discourse. The Agenda is the richer for it.
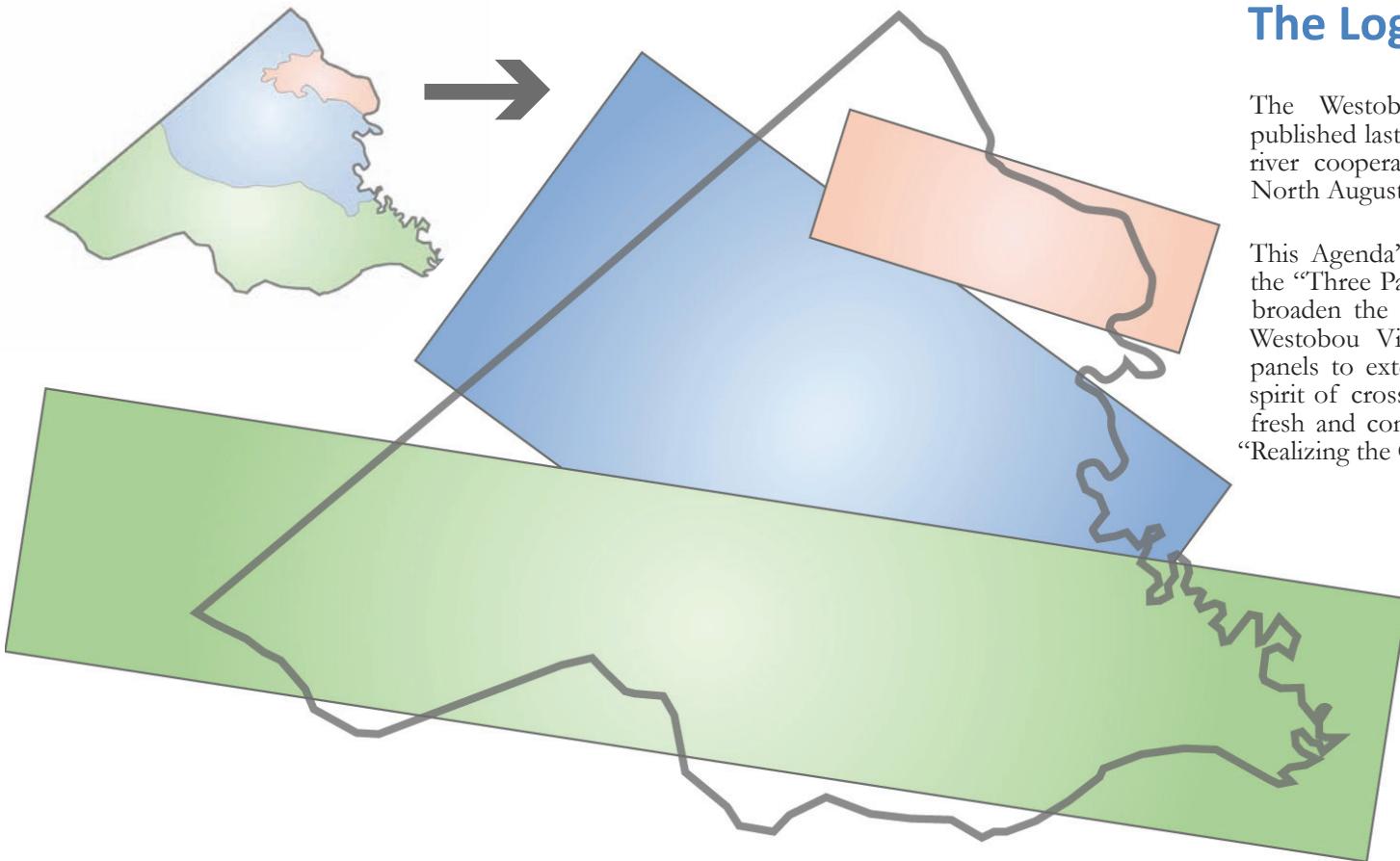
This Agenda was born of a recognized sense of urgency on the part of the city's leaders, and the larger public, to create common ground on which to build the city's future. A new spirit of collaboration is emerging to make Augusta an even better place to live, work, play and learn. We are confident about implementing this Agenda. Simply put, Augusta has the right stuff to work with and the right people to make it happen.

This Agenda frames critical future decision-making for the city and its leaders. Properly applied, it can make exciting and attractive places where now there is blight; connect where now there is disconnect. This Agenda touches all of Augusta, while targeting areas where critical issues and opportunities must be addressed now, for the health of the whole.

The Final Report synthasizes the information from the separate Projects and Policies Appendicies into a document for the direction of Augusta's Sustainable Development Agenda. The opinions, findings and conclusions of this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the City of Augusta.

The Logo

The Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan, published last year, spoke to the regional, cross-river cooperation between Augusta, GA and North Augusta, SC.

This Agenda's logo uses a stylized version of the "Three Parts of Augusta" to represent and broaden the regional scope established in the Westobou Vision. By allowing the colored panels to extend beyond Augusta, it retains a spirit of cross-county cooperation and it has a fresh and contemporary quality that speaks to "Realizing the Garden City".

Table of Contents

3. The Policy Agenda

4. Implementation

List of Figures

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Plan

In the years to come, cities and regions will compete more aggressively than in the past for new investment. The basis of this competition will be not only location and cost, but also quality of life. Although Augusta has made great strides with its downtown, many of its South Augusta neighborhoods have lagged behind. With consolidation of the City to incorporate the entirety of Richmond County, the enlarged city is now challenged to create a sustainable, attractive environment that will enhance its competitive position and will be equitable to all its residents.

The Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (ASDA) responds to this challenge by defining a large-scale sustainable development strategy using Smart Growth techniques for an initial set of action projects.

The most important Smart Growth component of these action projects is their location. Three factors determine if the location is viable[1]:

• How infrastructure (both green and built) investments are optimized.

• Proximity of jobs and services to housing.

• Potential for transportation options (both existing and long term).

The integration of these regional factors, with an understanding of their relationship to green infrastructure, leads to the identification of appropriate areas for new development.

This Agenda does not include a set of comprehensive projects for the entirety of the city; rather it includes a description of the types of action projects that can "make a difference" with specific development strategies and strategic partnerships.

_____

1   Ten Principles for Smart Growth on the Suburban Fringe. Urban Land Institute and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. 2004.

The City has historically advertised itself as the Garden City

Augusta: Past and Future Garden City

> *"Smart conservation in conjunction with smart development represents the next generation of smart growth."*
>
> *- Lawrence A. Selzer, President of The Conservation Fund*

Sustainable Development as the Route to "Realizing the Garden City"

The best gardens are carefully planned. While all require constant vigilance and maintenance, the successful garden is the one that thoughtfully balances conditions, attributes, plant types, energy levels and funding availability, all the while, evolving and adjusting to changing conditions.

Augusta, like the typical garden, is not a monolith. The city has its urban, suburban and rural areas. A sustainable plan recognizes these inherently different parts of the whole and plans accordingly, encouraging projects and policies that are well suited to their contexts, will contribute to future well being, are part of a coordinated vision, and are realistically conceived to be efficient of public sector resources while harnessing the energy of the private sector.

This coordinated method of pro actively guiding the city to a better, more thoughtful, future constitutes a sustainable development strategy that is amplified in this Agenda and its Appendices.

The Garden City as a Metaphor for Quality

Augusta calls itself the Garden City. This verdant ideal implies an attractive setting in which its citizens and its visitors can live, work, learn, and play. In order to achieve a garden city, officials and citizens must pro-actively undertake improvements and projects that enhance Augusta's environment and make it supportive to its residents. A healthy environment alone is not enough; a healthy economy is also required in order to fund civic betterments and achieve a high quality of life throughout the city, from its most urban to its most rural settings.

The gardens of Amen Corner at the Augusta National Golf Club are the image that the world has of Augusta

This Agenda Planning Process

Genesis of the Plan

The Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (ASDA) grew directly out of a sense within the city leadership that, more than a decade after consolidation with Richmond County, the diverse parts of the enlarged city had not yet coalesced into an unified community with a sustainable and unified vision.

The 2009 Westobou Vision, a joint plan for the downtown cores of Augusta, Georgia and North Augusta, South Carolina made obvious the need for such an agenda-oriented strategy for the rest of Augusta. The city's Commissioners directed the Mayor, City Administrator, and their planning team to develop a scope of work for a united, "One Augusta" twenty year, city-wide agenda.

The Agenda builds on the Augusta Comprehensive Plan, a policy and directional document, by defining specific actions and setting priorities for city decision-makers over the next decades. It generally follows the format of the Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan in order to reinforce the concept of a single, coordinated direction for the entire city.

A principal objective is to use this document to unify the city in ways that have not yet been possible with the consolidation process to date.

Developing the Agenda

The Agenda recognizes that there are many more opportunities than can be implemented over the next two decades, or can be reasonably analyzed within the scope of this work. The agenda focuses on example projects, which meet five specific criteria:

• They have a reasonable chance of being realized within a 20-year time frame.

• Their realization would best support the agenda's over-arching goals and objectives,

• They are so located that they support each other and establish a synergy that people can see and can support.

• They are prototypical examples of development types that can be applied in other parts of the City, as opportunity arises.

• There is a strong potential that, for each project, "champions" can be found to lead development and successful implementation.

Saturday morning ASDA review by the Georgia Tech faculty

Engaging the Community

The process was based on the assumption that the people of Augusta know their city best. Thus, by reaching out to all corners of the community, the best ideas would emerge and "champions" will be found to see the various projects to realization. The Agenda was developed over a sixteen-month effort that has involved a very broad section of the community.

First and foremost, the Agenda was shaped with the active involvement, input, and review of the **City Commissioners**. This effort began with a series of one-on-one meetings with them to determine a purpose and scope, as well as to identify key individuals in the private sector who could help determine the intent of this work.

Once the scope of work was established, each of the Commissioners was invited to lead the team on a tour of their respective districts. They pointed out issues and opportunities they wanted addressed in the course of this work. This, along with follow-up discussion with most, has been of immeasurable assistance in organizing this work.

An **Advisory Task Force** of more than fifty members of the community, including one appointed by each of the Commissioners, has met at critical points in the course of the work. This working group was led by Dr. Terry Elam, President of Augusta Technical College and provided input to the work and review of proposals and ideas. Additionally, Task Force members have been instrumental in helping to get the message out to the larger community and to solicit participation in smaller, targeted sessions. They have assisted in forging the process direction following each of the public meetings.

A small, but active **Steering Committee,** made up of Mayor Deke Copenhaver, Mayor Pro Tem- Al Mason, City Administrator Fred Russell, President of Augusta Tomorrow Dennis Skelley, and the chairman of this Agenda Advisory Task Force Dr. Terry Elam, met regularly since January 2010 to give focused guidance to the planning team. This has been a very valuable core group whose discussions and decisions have been both pragmatic and visionary.

Four, well-attended **Public Workshops** have been held. Workshop #1, which resulted in a series of "We believe…" statements that have guided the building of the Agenda. At Workshop #2, the team presented their summary of input to date and proposed a general direction for the work. At Workshop #3, a Findings Report was presented and discussed in open session. The final Workshop #4 was a presentation summarizing the preliminary Agenda, identifying both prototypical projects and recommended policies. A month after the last public meeting, three days of 'drop-in' sessions to explain details of the Agenda and to solicit final public comment.

The area covered by this plan is large, over 330 square miles with widely varying characteristics. The **Team** (members listed on page 2-162) conducted scores of meetings and field visits getting familiar with the various parts of the city and meeting with interested stakeholders.

Continuing Steps

The team then invited senior faculty from Georgia Institute of Technology's College of Architecture to publicly review the work as it progressed. The first of these was an all day session in late September with many Task Force members and several Commissioners in attendance.

Public and private participants have been very supportive of the efforts and recommendations made and have expressed continued interest in implementing the Agenda.

This continued community involvement is critical in going forward.

When the Agenda is approved officially by the City Commissioners, it will join the 2009 Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan and be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Augusta.

Then the work will really begin. The Agenda recommends establishment of an implementation entity within the City, whose full time work will be to guide the specific prototype projects and the recommended policies identified in this document to fruition. An organizational model is included as part of this Agenda, at the end of this report.

This entity would work with a newly formed advisory committee, similar to Augusta Tomorrow. While the entity would coordinate initiatives and strategies with Augusta Tomorrow it would focus the bulk of its energies on realizing projects outside the core urban area. For each project, the city and its advisory committee must find champions to provide ongoing support and leadership and to participate in preliminary development plans and detailed designs. For many top priority projects, land assembly will be required with public and private support.

Good Urbanism 101 course for Augusta

Organization of this Agenda Plan

The product of this study is presented in four documents; the intent of each is summarized below.

Part 1. Executive Summary

This report summarizes the entirety of the project is a single short volume.

Part 2. Final Report

The Final Report presents the rationale and structure for the Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda and includes the following sections:

- **Introduction** - reviews the purpose and structure of the plan and the steps of the planning process.

- **Context** – presents the history and current status of the planning area, identifying characteristics that differentiate the three "faces" of the region – Urban, Suburban, and Rural Augusta.

- **The Policy Agenda** – defines the driving citywide policy goals, by functional element as well as a synopsis of key recommended program initiatives.

- **The Project Agenda** – defines, based on the area context, what types of projects can best address existing problems and contribute to regional sustainability, locates areas where each project type is appropriate, and defines in further detail 11 key Prototype Projects that can be the focus for immediate action.

- **Implementation** – defines an organizational approach to making the Augusta Sustainability Agenda happen, including proposed responsibilities for the public and private sectors and immediate next steps.

Appendix 1: The Projects Agenda

"The Projects" presents in illustrative detail each of the prototype projects with their rationale and the specific next action steps to be taken. The Prototype Projects are intended to illustrate approaches to site-specific opportunities that can serve as initial demonstrations of model approaches that could be suitable elsewhere in Augusta at comparable locations.

Appendix 2: The Sustainable Development Policies

"The Policies" presents policy recommendations for sustainable development that should be enacted in order to guide growth to the "right" locations in support of this Agenda. These include changes in land development codes and regulations, new procedures for the development approval process, the promotion of clustered development at intersections, the adoption of a new beautification overlay for roadways, and other initiatives to encourage inner-ring neighborhood improvement. Factors critical to this Appendix are:

- Promoting economically viable development that preserves open space and natural resources (green infrastructure).

- Integrating new, compact development into existing commercial areas and town centers.

- Collaboration among the public and private sectors on growth and development issues with predictability in the new development approval process.

Context for the Agenda

Prior and Ongoing Planning Activities

More than twenty years ago, Augusta Tomorrow developed a downtown plan, which has largely been implemented and was a model for joint public-private partnership planning in Augusta. It was produced at a time when financial institutions were based in the city and, along with individual local interests, became natural "champions" of specific projects.

Soon thereafter, the Regency Mall, a large regional shopping center on Rocky Creek at Deans Bridge Road and the Gordon Highway, failed. Over time, several plans and initiatives were developed for that area, all to naught. During this time, Augusta Tomorrow produced a very good plan for major gateways and corridors into the city. However, neither champions nor funding was found for implementation. A master plan was developed for the historic Augusta Canal. The Augusta National Heritage Area was established, that plan is being aggressively implemented

while continually evolving. In 2009, the City of Augusta also produced a Comprehensive Plan for the entire city/county area, which defines a broad planning framework for the area. Many of the findings and analyses in the Comprehensive Plan have been incorporated into this Agenda.

The City is presently developing master neighborhood plans for targeted inner city neighborhoods, including Laney Walker, Bethlehem and Harrisburg.

The original downtown plan was revisited in the early 2000's and then again in 2009, by the Westobou Vision, a joint collaboration between Augusta and North Augusta, SC. As with the Westobou Vision, the Augusta Development Agenda is "attribute-based," as it capitalizes on the natural, historic, social and cultural resources of the area; identifies settings and connections; and builds on the city's business successes. Most importantly, it focuses on finding the "champions", who have both the will and the acumen to provide leadership in project implementation and sustained operation.

A result of the involvement of the Georgia Institute of Technology in this planning effort, both the School of Architecture and the School of City and Regional Planning are engaged in studio projects in Augusta. The Georgia Conservancy has launched a multi-year "Blueprints for Successful Communities" project around Harrisburg. Through this process, the Conservancy will work with community members to develop an action plan that makes the most of their assets and faces their challenges head on. As a unique growth management program, Blueprints will[2]:

- Place emphasis on the protection of natural resources.

- Bring an inclusive array of stakeholders to the table in the planning process.

- Provide public training on quality growth concepts and policies.

- Maintain active interdisciplinary partnerships to present a range of expertise.

---

2 The Georgia Conservancy. Communities and Quality Growth Programs. https://www.georgiaconservancy.org/index.php?page=communities-quality-growth

A Brief Look at Augusta Past and Present

The Land

Augusta is in the heart of the Southeastern US, on the Georgia and South Carolina line and is a two hours drive, along Interstate-20, due east of Atlanta.

The city was sited here because this was the end of navigable water coming up from Savannah. The river shoals were a gathering place and a natural crossing point for local Native American tribes, making the site strategic for military and trade reasons.

Augusta is big, having gone through a recent consolidation of the city and the county. Roughly triangular in shape, the city is more than thirty miles on each side. River lowlands on the east give way to rolling hills to the west. From north to south the landform is a series and hills and valleys, with creeks running west to east emptying into swampland and eventually the Savannah.

Soils vary significantly across the land. The best farmland in Augusta is found in the southwestern part of the city around the independent communities of Blythe and Hephzibah.

Augusta was originally laid out by James Oglethorpe, whose statue is located on the Augusta Common

Broad Street, a historic meeting place (photo from Historic Augusta, Inc)

The People

Adventurers, entrepreneurs, farmers, laborers, immigrant servants, and slaves settled Augusta. It is a border town, often at odds with its neighbors across the Savannah in South Carolina.

Augusta traditionally was a mix of city dwellers in the downtown with family settlements and communities in the rural areas of what was once Richmond County. This city vs. county organization led to a sense of isolation and distrust between the city and rural communities, which must be overcome.

Today, urbanizing pressures are changing rural areas into bedroom communities with extensive subdivision development, often in an unplanned and ad-hoc manner.

Within the past two decades the City has become an African American majority (53%), with an emerging Asian (2%) and Hispanic (3%) presence[3]. For the most part, these groups continue to live in economically segregated communities within the city.

With Fort Gordon, the Medical College of Georgia and the Savannah River Site, Augusta enjoys a high percentage of well-educated professionals. However, the City lags its metropolitan region and the state in both the overall level of education of its population. Many of the retiring military personnel from Fort Gordon express a desire to stay here.

Governance

James Oglethorpe's strong, military leadership founded the City and set its direction. As settlement in Georgia expanded westward, for a brief time, Augusta was the capitol. The Civil War brought a Reconstruction government and eventually Jim Crow laws, enforced until the mid 1950's. During this period, separate city and county governments emerged. In 1996, the people of Augusta voted to consolidate the governments and the City Charter was abandoned. In the process Hephzibah and Blythe, two communities in the south of Richmond County became independent municipalities.

Today, Augusta government is characterized by a 'weak' Mayor system, an appointed City Administrator, and a Board of Commissioners with districts shaped to assure equal racial representation. Department Heads answer directly to the Commissioners. There is

---

3   U.S. Census Bureau. 2009.

Old Medical College of Georgia, the state's first medical university (photo from Historic Augusta, Inc)

King Mill is the last operating textile facility in the city

no active redevelopment agency within the city government, and most planning and implementation is done through an ad-hoc system of state authorities, the Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission and private initiatives.

Economic Development

In the early years of Augusta, the city evolved from a military trading post into a farming town and a shipping point for cotton from upriver. In 1846, the Augusta Canal became a bypass to the falls enabling cotton to be transported to mew mills along its banks, creating a thriving industrial city. In the early 20th century, before Florida began to develop, Augusta and its region became a major recreational destination, particularly for wealthy northerners interested in horses and golf. The Medical College of Georgia started here in the 1800's.

Augusta was always the regional center. The major retail started on Broad Street, but soon there were small settlements including Bath, Blythe, Hephzibah, McBean, Summerville and others scattered around the county. During the mid-1940's retail followed highway development and sprawl into south and west Augusta and more recently into Belair.

After WWII, Augusta benefited greatly from its proximity to the water resource of the Savannah River, with development of the so-called Miracle Mile of industrial manufacturers and the growth of the Savannah River Site. Camp Gordon eventually evolved into Fort Gordon and is by far the city's largest employer, followed by its strong health sciences industry.

Today, there are over 500,000 people living in the six-county metropolitan area with approximately 40% of them residing within the City of Augusta. By 2030, regional population is forecasted to be over 650,000, however Augusta's share is expected to drop to 34% by 2030. Growth within the Augusta city limits is projected to be modest.

The Partridge Inn was part of an emerging tourist industry sparked by wealthy northerns who watned to escape harsh winters.

Augusta's incomes are well below both its region and state. As manufacturing jobs decline, they are being replaced by jobs in the service, health care, energy and defense sectors. The housing market remains strong. Within the past 2 years, nearly 2,500 homes have been purchased at a median cost of $99,000.

There is a strong professional base, due largely to the health sciences and technology concentration found here. This professional resource base suggests potential for expansion of both the technology and the higher education industries. Also, market research suggests that there is room for university expansion to an additional enrollment of 4,000 - 5,000 undergraduate students for a city of this size, particularly within the downtown area.

Augusta has all the attributes to make it a major tourist destination including: climate; historic buildings; the river, creeks, ponds, canals, and; sports and arts heritage and reputation. If it leverages its connections to James Brown and the Masters, the City is poised to become a significant visitor and convention destination.

Open Space

Oglethorpe laid out Augusta's street grid with lots almost double the size of previously laid out Savannah. Broad Street, still the widest main street in the country was originally 300 feet wide, as it was intended as a multi-use space. Open farmland came up to the city edges. People used the riverbank, for both work and leisure purposes. Eventually, green medians were laid out along the major downtown streets, including Broad and Greene. In the 1800's, the First Level Canal was a popular recreation venue, with boats cruising from the boat basin near the present St. Sebastian corridor all the way up the canal's 10-mile length to the head gates. There, a park of sorts included a dance pavilion, BBQ shed and screened-in picnic area.

As Summerville developed, green medians were laid out, along Central and Henry Streets. As Augusta became a tourist destination around the turn of the century, a number of golf courses were developed including the famed Augusta National Golf Club.

Public parks were developed at will, some built by the mill enterprises, such as Chaffee Park, others built by the city, like Diamond Lakes. Lake Olmstead was a popular picnicking and boating destination. Augusta's first organized baseball park was downtown, adjacent to the canal and Fifteenth Street. Over the years, smaller parks were scattered throughout the neighborhoods, Maintenance of the largest of the older neighborhood parks, Pendleton Park, is now financed through a trust.

The city's best-developed and most highly used parks today include the Augusta Common, the Riverwalk, and Diamond Lakes. The Savannah River has become a major recreational open space and the Savannah River Bluffs Park near Bush Field is popular for many.

Dam on the Savannah River that feeds the canals

The Brahe House, of the Sand Hills Cottage typology, became the first house in town to have electric lighting in the Summerville Historic District (photo from Historic Augusta, Inc)

The Augusta Canal Authority, responsible for the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, has developed the former canal towpath into a multi-use corridor and is building an extensive new trail between the river and the canal, and through the Laney Walker neighborhood. Plans are afoot to create a bikeway using the existing levee from downtown to the Savannah River Bluffs Dam and Park the along Butler Creek, perhaps as far as Fort Gordon. Extending these efforts into an interconnected system of paths and parkways for Augusta should be a major priority.

Land preservation should be an important part of a green space strategy for Augusta. Along the river and its creeks extensive tracts of undeveloped land should be protected and preserved. The farmland in the southern third of Augusta offers an important cultural landscape that is not only productive, but also provides important habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna.

The Central Savannah River Land Trust, in conjunction with the City, is the most active contributor to preserving these landscapes.

Neighborhoods

Augusta's first fort settlements were located at what is today St. Paul's church on Reynolds Street and along the Savannah River continued various trading routes. During the Industrial Revolution, the advent of rail travel and textile manufacturing sparked further development and expansion around the downtown area. Augusta annexed nearby Summerville and the unincorporated areas of Forest Hills and Highland Park in the early twentieth century, acquiring a blend of newer and older housing stock.

While urban development flourished in the city, the rest of Richmond County remained largely agrarian. Until the 1940s, most residential development was centered in small towns throughout the county, such as Bath, Blythe, Mt. Eton, and Hephzibah. Following World War II, suburban development exploded throughout the county and continues to expand.

Today about 30,000 acres of Augusta is devoted to residential land use; 62.2% of all residential uses in 2007 constituted detached single-family housing. Duplexes, apartments, manufactured homes, and group quarters comprise the rest of the city's housing stock. According to the American Community Housing Survey's 2007 estimates, 53% of the housing units in Augusta were built between 1940 and 1979 and 31% were built between 1980 and 1999, mostly in affordable, middle class subdivisions.

Revitalization of homes in Laney Walker

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan projected that 13,000 additional housing units will be constructed by 2030, mostly in South Augusta. Although detached single-family units will continue to dominate the market, the Plan identifies an increased demand for attached and semi-detached units on small lots that can serve an aging population as well as projected growth in "empty nester" and one-person households.

Some major housing and development initiatives currently underway are:

• Revitalization of the Laney Walker and Bethlehem neighborhoods aimed at stabilizing the residential and commercial zones while celebrating historical and cultural significance. Five new homes on Holley Street have already been constructed for this project, and others are in the works.

• City efforts for Neighborhood Stabilization Program II funds to complete the Village at Goshen development.

• The redevelopment of Underwood Homes and the possible collaboration with the adjacent Marion Homes redevelopment and the rest of Sandbar Ferry Village.

• The proactive efforts in Harrisburg to revitalize that area and to make it safer for its residents.

Transportation

Augusta was originally a river town, then a railroad town, and was built with a streetcar service for nearly 70 years. In fact, the streetcar was operational until 1937. Augusta had been on the primary north-south highway on the east coast, known as US 1, but is now off main north/south interstates.

Today, Augusta is emerging from a time of expansive roadway construction. These projects are mostly roadway and bridge projects that intended to improve the capacity of the road network within the city.

Some of the recent, major transportation undertakings include:

• Completion of a new passenger terminal at Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field. This is a good field with excess runway capability and could be a partner in economic development of Doug Barnard Highway and Gordon Highway in particular.
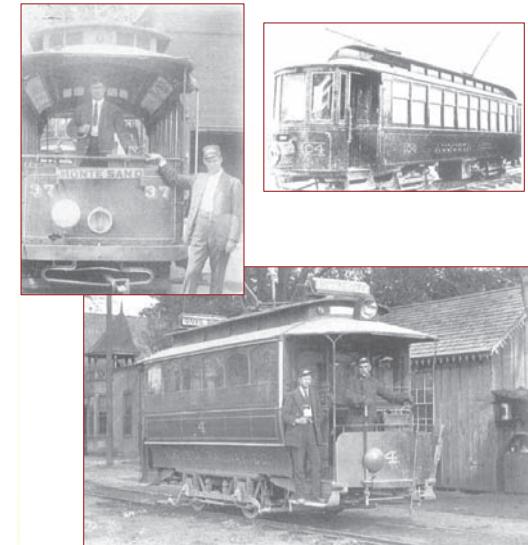
- Near completion of Interstate 520, Palmetto Parkway, which will open up a new entrance to Augusta and downtown on the east side.

- Widening of Interstate 20 through the city and building the fly-over intersection at Interstate 520, Bobby Jones Expressway, providing an improved entrance to Augusta via the other end of I-520.

- Extension of Saint Sebastian Way north to Broad and Reynolds Streets and extension of Greene Street west to Riverwatch Parkway, providing a congestion-relieving access to and from the medical area and an overpass over the CSX Railroad west of the Central Business District.

- Completion of the Savannah River Parkway south toward Savannah, via U.S. 25, Peach Orchard Road.

Future projects for the area identified thus far include:

- Major roadway upgrades on Windsor Spring Road and along the southern section of Fifteenth Street.

- The proposed extension of the Fall Line Freeway from Augusta, through Macon to Columbus, Georgia to Birmingham.

Very often, commitments to major transportation projects are made without full understanding or appreciation of the resultant land use and development impacts of these projects.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan recognized that imperatives of dealing with resource management, public health, and climate change demand a broader approach to transportation. Some recommendations of that plan with important transportation implications are summarized in the next column.

- Identify areas where higher-density, mixed-use development would be appropriate and develop the applicable regulations.

- Promote or require more street and sidewalk interconnections between neighborhoods.

- Promote the use of a grid or modified grid street pattern in new subdivisions.

- Implement projects in the ARTS Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan that create a general network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the city.

The Westobou Vision called for a comprehensive review of transportation projects recommended in the course of that work, including the Augusta downtown streetcar proposal. All of these efforts are supported by this Agenda.
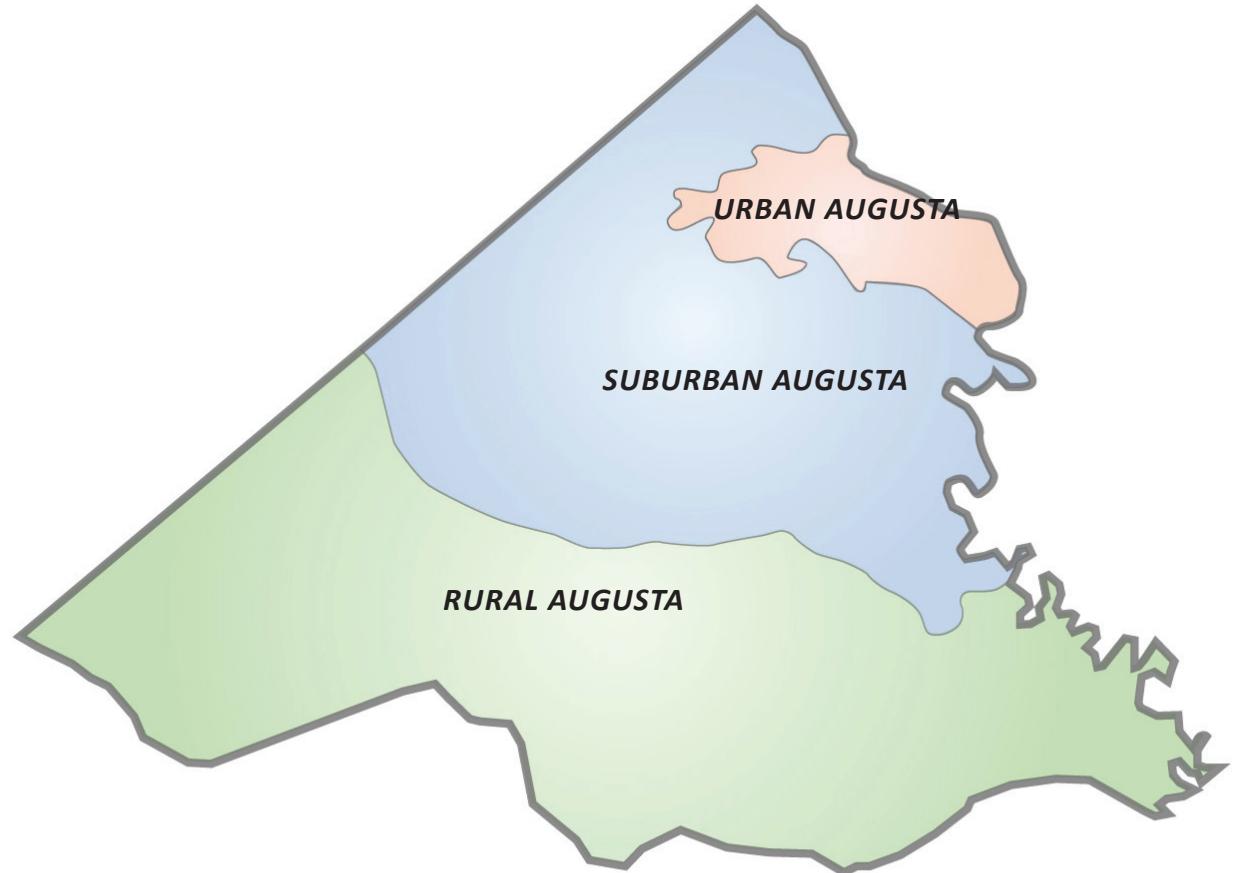
The Three Parts of Augusta

One result of consolidation is that the City of Augusta has expanded beyond its traditional urban area to include a large ring of suburban development and, beyond that ring, extensive rural land uses in the southern third of the city. This offers prospective residents a choice of living styles in very different environments. These are very different facets of the city, each prized in its own way.

However, to date, the prevailing attitude of both the public and private sector is that each of these areas are simply lesser developed aspects of the whole, and that over time, sprawling development will consume it all. Without disciplined public policy, sprawl will continue to threaten the landscape. It is important that codes, plans and policies are reviewed in order to make changes that support this Agenda recommendation of growth at intersections, in clusters.

The Agenda sets forth specific Prototype Projects for all three parts in Appendix 1. Sustainable Development policies are further discussed in Appendix 2.

URBAN AUGUSTA

SUBURBAN AUGUSTA

RURAL AUGUSTA

An attractive, vernacular house style in Rural Augusta near Blythe, GA

Rural Augusta

This part of Augusta lies generally south of Spirit Creek and outside the city's current sewer system. Several arterial roads, including US 1, The Savannah River Parkway and Mike Padgett Parkway cross the area from south to north en route to downtown. The area is crisscrossed by a number of secondary roads. Significant tracts of timber, farmlands, and undeveloped land give the area an open and rural character. Spirit Creek, Little Spirit Creek, and McBeans Creek run west to east into the lowlands of the Savannah River. Fort Gordon occupies the western edge of the area.

Rural Augusta has very significant tracts of high quality farmland, characterized by extensive fields and pastures that are most prominent around Blythe and Hephzibah. Open fields and scenic views along Deans Bridge Road from the Burke County line to Tobacco Road reinforce the rural character of the area. Secondary roads, such as Route-88 and the southern reach of Windsor Spring Road, are largely intact as scenic farmland corridors, with many valuable view sheds. Substantial farms remain in operation, particularly along US-1 and Deans Bridge Road.

However, the city's land subdivision and zoning ordinances have allowed a substantial number of formerly intact farms to be subdivided into house lots for residential subdivisions, destroying the predominant character of the area. This reduces this unique area into just another subdivision, just further out and more cheaply developed.

The suburban area still has substantial capacity that the market cannot fill. Negative consequences of this policy include not only erosion of the rural character of the area but also diminishment of the vitality of residential and commercial uses in suburban areas.

An active farm along US-1

Suburban Augusta

The suburbs of Augusta join a crescent of land that encircles the historic city core. This swath of Augusta includes the areas described in the Comprehensive Plan as Neighborhood Character Areas of West Augusta, Belair, and South Augusta. These areas have considerable differences from one another in terms of populations and quality of housing stock, but have all experienced growth over the last fifty years.

While much of Suburban Augusta is developed, analysis done by this Agenda has determined that there is room for another ten to fifteen thousand households within the area where sewer services are available.

Public Services

Suburban Augusta has many attributes to build upon. With the exception of a few undeveloped pockets, it enjoys full sewer service. It is the center of Augusta's population, and that includes a well-trained and able- bodied workforce. It is strategically located, and largely accessible to the major job centers of the downtown, Fort Gordon and the large manufacturing facilities of East Augusta. Several creeks traverse the area and, if properly planned, can become attractive recreational corridors.

Commercial Corridors

However, Augusta's suburbs are also a land of large arterial highways, strip shopping centers and sprawling subdivisions, Consequently, this is the least attractive part of Augusta. The arterial roads are utilitarian, with minimal landscaping. As a result they are ugly. The roadside plantings that do exist are poorly maintained, though there are citizen groups emerging who are actively engaged to improve segments of these roads.

Most of the land adjacent to these suburban road corridors is in commercial use, as the roadways are not attractive or pedestrian friendly enough to support residential use. The commercial and retail market is not strong enough to attract sufficient high quality businesses to this area; thus many existing retail properties are marginally functioning and rundown physically. While the city has strong signage and commercial property landscaping requirements, most of the existing businesses, the vast bulk of the inventory, have not sufficiently invested in their properties to trigger these requirements.

Residential Subdivisions

Suburban Augusta became, and still remains, attractive to those who have a car and can find the American Dream of having their own home, a spacious yard, and at a low price. This occurred so much so that today, most Augustans live here. However, increased transportation costs have offset lower housing prices. The disconnected street system of individual subdivisions leads to isolation and to less efficient movement, causing traffic jams on major arterials, such as Windsor Spring Road.

Moreover, as new housing becomes ever cheaper in the next subdivision further out, older subdivisions become less appealing. The result is that many older subdivisions have fallen into disrepair, as residents have limited ability to maintain their houses and yards properly. As

these developments age, so do their populations, with less and less disposable income. Family owned homes become rental properties, often with absentee landlords. Neighborhood pride and house and yard maintenance go down while crime and anxiety go up.

An isolated, single-entry point suburb, along Tobacco Road. This subdivision is popular now, but with ever expanding sprawl, it could struggle in in the decades to come.

Urban Augusta

Downtown Augusta is the heart of the five-county region and is the center of government, jobs, culture, and entertainment. The MCG | Georgia Health Sciences University and Paine College are located here, as are several major hospital and medical service centers. This is a very historic area, founded upon river traffic, with an extensive canal system. It has a strong historic fabric of 18th, 19th and 20th century structures, built upon the powerful street grid laid out by James Oglethorpe nearly 300 years ago. The riverfront, the street grid and the canal network form the framework on which redevelopment is occurring.

The commercial core is surrounded by historic neighborhoods: Old Town, Laney Walker, Bethlehem, Harrisburg, and Summerville. An active business and civic interest group, Augusta Tomorrow, Inc., in partnership with the city, has redeveloped large portions of the riverfront. The Augusta Canal Authority has created a National Heritage Area around the canal system.

Downtown Augusta has many historic structures and a great natural setting, but has an overabundance of open lots which weaken its overall character and make it less enjoyable to walk around.

City sponsored downtown programs and events happen often. Performing arts and museum interest is strong. The area is home to two of the city's magnet schools. Private development is slowly revitalizing and reusing the wealth of vacant historic properties.

However, Urban Augusta suffers from the flight to the suburbs that most mid-sized American cities have experienced over the past seventy years. Camouflaged by its strong grid and its many historic buildings, much downtown land is vacant or under-utilized. This is particularly true of the former rail and industrial areas along the river and the canals, though this has been a focus area for decades. Outward expansion of a slowly growing economy has robbed the downtown of much of its original market potential.

The urban neighborhoods have suffered most from this outward movement. The private market is slowly rediscovering the most attractive areas. The public sector, led by the city's Housing and Community Development Department, has aggressive rehabilitation and infill programs. A number of new urban-oriented, public facilities have been built along Laney Walker Boulevard. A new judicial center and library are aimed at in-filling lost city fabric, while meeting the required programmatic needs.

The 2009 Westobou Vision, with its urban area focus, looked at ways in which the City could mend its tattered fabric, largely through a series of Market Creation Projects. These projects were focused on core urban attributes in order to stitch the new into the old in a way that reconnects and reinforces the urban area as a whole. Projects in the downtown core tie back to adjacent neighborhoods through a network of new open space, uses, and activities. The task now is to see these through to completion and to extend these connections and opportunities further out into the community.

This includes east along Sandbar Ferry Road, west along Broad Street to Washington Road. This Agenda recommends that Augusta's new growth occur through Fifteenth Street, Milledgeville Road, and Deans Bridge Road to Rocky Creek. And that it be named "Augusta Way".

This new "Augusta Way" corridor would transverse through the newly proposed Priority Development District as a well-landscaped boulevard and adjacent multi-purpose way. It would extend from the riverfront at the Augusta Common, through the Marbury Village and Harrisburg sections of Broad Street, along Fifteenth Street, and through the medical area and Paine College. Continuing on Fifteenth Street, the "Augusta Way" Boulevard would pass through Oates Creek, then onto Deans Bridge Road, through the Southgate area, terminating at Rocky Creek.

It is along this corridor that Urban and Suburban Augusta can connect and grow the whole of the city.

Augusta should do what it takes to keep downtown vibrant.

The Structure of the Agenda

Overview Approach

The Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (ASDA) has been developed as a multi-layered approach:

• Citywide, the purpose is to enhance competitiveness and quality of Augusta.

• For the "Three Parts of Augusta" described in the preceding chapter, a customized strategy for future growth and development has been developed to reinforce the most positive attributes of these very different areas and contribute towards the region's diversity and character.

• For each of the key functional elements of Augusta – economy, environment, community, and linkages – a basic direction is defined that will influence growth and change towards long-term sustainability.

The recommendations of this Agenda are made at two levels: (1) Project recommendations designed to demonstrate how the overall approach can make a difference in critical locations; (2) Sustainable Development policy recommendations designed to preserve resources, enhance the public environment, and improve communities and neighborhoods.

Community Input

Well-attended public workshops yielded a series of "We believe" statements, which have guided development of the Agenda since early in the process. These goals have been distilled into the core components of the Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda on the next page.

Goals of the Agenda

The Agenda process began with a series of one-on-one meetings and field trips with the City Commissioners to gauge issues and opportunities most important to the city leaders. The focus of the initial public workshop was to solicit input in order to better establish the goals and objectives of the general public. A critical overall goal, established at the outset, was that the Agenda should start a city-wide dialogue, develop a give and take education process, and accelerate the city and county consolidation to realize a more unified municipality, "One Augusta."

By "Three Parts of Augusta"

The goals for each of the city's character areas are:

In Urban Augusta: Make the urban core of the city into an active mixed-use environment with growing businesses, lively in-town housing, and cultural/civic uses that serve the region.

In Suburban Augusta: Concentrate new development and creative rehabilitation and redevelopment at key intersection nodes to form shopping and service clusters that reinforce neighborhoods, create a sense of community, and take advantage of local natural amenities.
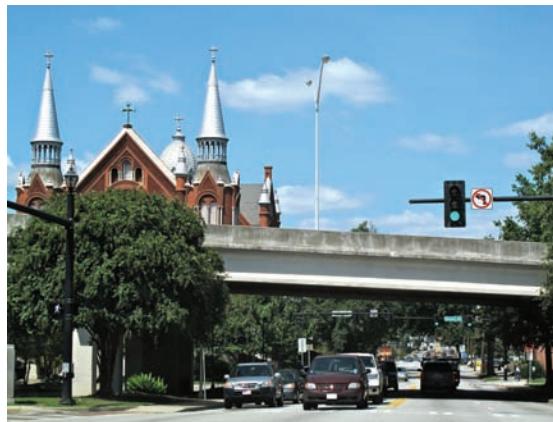
In Rural Augusta: Preserve the character-defining visual environment of farmlands and natural areas of rural Augusta, allowing only low-density development clusters and rural lifestyle communities where sewer system extension is not appropriate.

By Functional Element

The goals for each key element of the Agenda are as follows:

Reserving damage done to Augusta's historic fabric and restoring walkable neighborhoods makes good economic sense.

Economic Development

Public and private interests work in concert to enhance existing regional strengths (health sciences, industry, Fort Gordon, higher education, arts, sports and history) and to cluster commercial and service developments to more efficient patterns that can reinforce neighborhoods.

Public Workshop Input:

• We believe . . . that Augusta can build a more potent economy based on technology, high tech manufacturing, medical facilities, and education.

• We believe . . . that Augusta has the climate, natural resources, history, and heritage to become a major tourist destination, regional cultural and entertainment center, and attractive retirement destination.

• We believe . . . that Augusta can revitalize its older neighborhoods through targeted development of mixed-use centers at key intersections.

Resultant Goal . . .

Increase Economic Activity and Vitality

Open Space

Waterways, natural habitats, and agricultural areas are recognized for their environmental amenities as well as resources whose preservation and linkage add value to appropriate adjoining and nearby development.
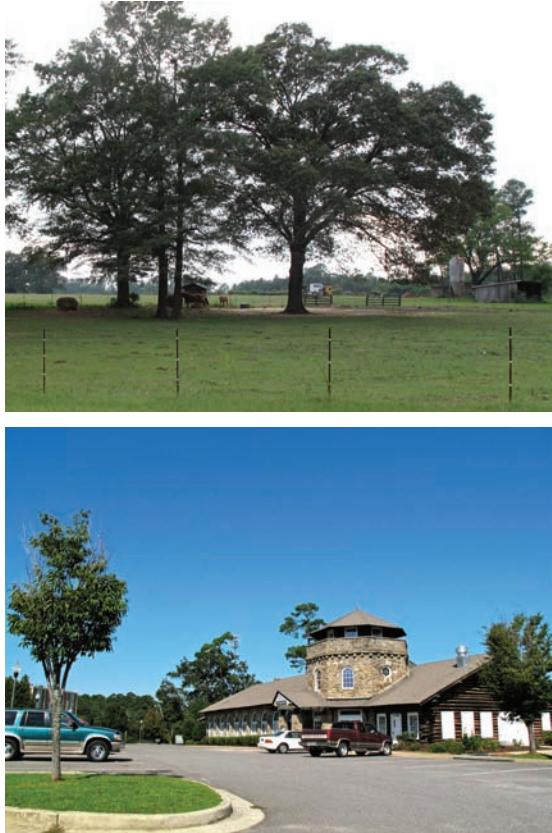
Public Workshop Input:

• We believe . . . in creating a highly connected network of trails for active recreational uses, particularly around Butler and Rocky Creeks.

• We believe . . . would range from simple neighborhood amenities to more intense uses such as mountain bike trails.

• We believe . . . that Augusta can attract new markets and preserve land at the same time.

• We believe . . . in an integrated green infrastructure approach to land conservation.

Resultant Goal . . .

Protect and Enhance the Environment and its Resources

Connecting people with their urban parks and rural landscapes are both goals of this Agenda

Neighborhoods

Growth and development in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Augusta is guided to create a unique sense of place in each area by preserving quality environments, revitalizing key nodes, improving major corridors, and enhancing neighborhood character.

Public Workshop Input:

• We believe . . . in stabilizing existing single-family neighborhoods by encouraging infill housing, productive re-use of vacant property, and strategic demolition.

• We believe . . . in focusing public investment in order to encourage clustered town centers that combine walkability, convenience, and community near public services like schools, libraries, and administrative offices.

• We believe . . . in reinforcing the rural character of the area south of Tobacco Road.

• We believe . . . in planning transportation services in coordination with new cluster development to increase the viability of public transit.

• We believe . . . in limiting sewer expansion to areas where intensive development is being encouraged.

Resultant Goal . . .

Reinforce Livable Communities and Neighborhoods

Transportation

The City and Georgia DOT work in concert to re-conceive regional roadways as environmental assets by using contemporary roadway design standards while improving public transit and encouraging alternative modes of transportation (bike, pedestrian, and electric vehicles).

Public Workshop Input:

• We believe . . . in realizing the "Garden City" concept through a layered treatment approach dependent on road corridor type.

• We believe . . . that a network of mixed-use parkways should link key destinations throughout Augusta through multiple means (car, bike, bus).

• We believe . . . in further reinforcing these mixed-use parkways by developing prototype communities at key nodes along them.

Resultant Goal . . .

Create Effective and Attractive Regional Linkages

Summary of Development Principles, Goals, and Recommended Actions to Realize the Garden City

The accompanying chart provides a summary of key development initiatives for each part of Augusta and for each functional element. A summary of the Policy Recommendations is provided at the end of this report with further detail provided in Appendix 2: Recommendations for Sustainable Development. Also at the end of this report, a summary of the Prototypical Projects, with further detail provided in Appendix 1: The Projects.

Part of Augusta	Goals	Economic Development: *Increase Economic Activity and Vitality*
Urban Augusta	The urban core of the city is an active mixed-use environment with growing businesses, lively in-town housing, and cultural/civic uses that serve the region.	Implement the **Market Creation Projects** of the Urban Area Plan: 1) Create opportunities to **expand health sciences businesses** near existing medical complex 2) Expand **cultural, performance, and sports facilities** in the urban core 3) Make **downtown a center for urban living** with a variety of housing types 4) Attract a **new, resident-based college or university** to the downtown district.
Suburban Augusta	New developments and creative rehabilitation and redevelopment at key intersection nodes form shopping and service clusters that reinforce neighborhoods, create a sense of community, and take advantage of local natural amenities.	1) Develop large-scale **Regional Mixed Use Nodes** *(Project 5a - Peach Orchard Place for "Big Box" uses)(Project 5b - Rocky Creek Park for business and jobs associated with flood protection investment)* 2) Reposition existing strip retail and surroundings to serve as **Village Nodes** *(Project 6a - South Gate Urban Village incluidng mixed income housing, neighborhood retail, and links to existing public services and adjoining neighborhoods* 3) **Direct investment into the ASDA Priority Development District** between the medical area and Rocky Creek, linking several proposed project areas
Rural Augusta	The character-defining visual environment of farmlands and natural areas of rural Augusta is retained, encouraging low-density development clusters and rural lifestyle communities appropriate to areas where sewer system extension is not appropriate.	1) Designate and zone areas for **Rural Hamlets** at key intersections that encourage attractive and walkable clusters of single family housing close to convenence retail, and other public services *(Project 2a: Spirit Creek Hamlet)* 2) **Promote land uses which will conserve rural character**, including agriculture, forestry, and rural sporting activites 3) Plan for agriculture to remain an economically viable land use, with areas of farms of sufficient size and productivity to remain sustainable.

Open Space and Environment: *Protect and Enhance the Environment and its Resources*	Neighborhood and Community Development: *Reinforce Liveable Communities and Neighborhoods*	Transportation and Linkages: *Create Effective and Attractive Regional Linkages*
Implement **Environmental** Recommendations of the Urban Area Plan including:	Implement **Housing and Neighborhood** recommendations of Urban Area Plan	Implement **Transportation** recommendations of Urban Area Plan
1) Westobou Open Space Network	1) **Marbury Village** development	1) Develop **Westobou Trace** along Sandbar Ferry and through downtown to Upper Broad St
2) **Landscaped roadways** linking Market Creation Projects	2) **Sandbar Ferry neighborhood redevelopment** and repositioning	2) **Remove elevated sections of J. C. Calhoun Expressway** and reclaim associated land for the Harrisburg community
3) Improve and expand river-related open spaces related to new developments	3) **Other housing and neighborhood improvements in Laney-Walker, Bethlehem, and Upper Broad Street (Project 7b)** as well as expansion opportunities and neighborhood supportive services	3) Develop **Riverwatch Heritage Parkway** 4) **Improve gateways and corridors through landscaping and signage controls** *(Project 8a - I-520/Sandbar Ferry Interchange)*
1) Identify areas of natural and ecological value where expanded **Conservation Subdivision** options will improve neighborhood quality (Project 4a - Butler Creek)	1) Develop new **Town Centers** to serve outlying areas with a mix of housing types, shopping, public services and institutions in the area *(Project 3a - Windsor Spring and Project 3b - Belair)*	**1) Improve gateways and corridors through** landscaping and signage controls
2) **Low Impact Development** site design standards for stormwater management	2) **Expand city neighborhood and housing revitalization programs** in areas adjoining the new growth corridor and other key action areas *(Project 7a - Oates Creek)*	2) **Make Augusta Way multi-modal** (incorporate transit, bike, and pedestrian)
3) Protect sensitive water courses and create new open space amenities (e.g. - Project 4a -Butler Creek or Project 5b - Rocky Creek) and improve neighborhood connections to their natural amenities	3) **Designate Overlay Districts** to encourage implementation of Prototypical Projects as well as to discourage inappropriate continued strip development along arterials.	3) Develop **street connectivity requirements** for new subdivisions.
4) Use **Green Infrastrcuture** in the development approval process to determine the "right" locations to build.	4) Create traditional neighborhoods through "**Walkable Subdivisions**" design.	4) Re-create **Gordon Highway, Windsor Spring, and Tobacco Road as scenic parkways** through right of way changes and control of frontage development
1) Designate areas where agriculture is the preferred land use through an **Agriculture and Timber Protection Zone** for Rural Augusta that defines large minimum parcel sizes 2) Create incentives to encourage the **preservation of orchards and pastures** and their use for educational and cultural purposes *(Project 1a - Fall Line Farm)* 3) Update the Water and Sewer Master Plan to **restrict further sewer expansio**n south of Spirit Creek	1) **Promote small lifestyle community development appropriate to Rural Augusta** (such as equestrian, farming, creek front, golf) 2) **Promote a vernacular building style** that will enhance the cultural landscape of rural Augusta through design guidelines	1) Protect the visual character on selected arterial roads by enacting Scenic Overlay Zones 2) Develop a **bicycle-friendly** roadway network

2. THE PROJECTS

Key Projects identified in the Agenda fall into three distinct physical development categories, representing city-wide opportunities for action:

Strategic Action Corridors

With few exceptions, Augusta's roadway gateways and entry corridors are ugly and Augusta visitors receive a poor first impression Within the context of the Agenda, the focus is on reinforcing healthy and attractive activities along the corridors, advancing the economic development strategy and making the rights of way and key nodes more beautiful and more pleasant to travel. Six specific corridors have been identified for special attention. These are also discussed as they relate to Site Specific Projects by Type.

Site Specific Projects by Type

These are site-specific projects and project types, with illustrative development programs, budgets and time lines. A seen in the diagrammatic map below, potential sites for these projects are found scattered across the city. Often, they represent a unique opportunity that, unless the city is willing to aggressively push to encourage better development, will simply become another ad-hoc project with little positive relationship to its surroundings and consequently squander an opportunity to make a positive difference in the overall quality of life for people.

Other Noteworthy Initiatives

In addition to the specific project types, there are a number of individual initiatives underway by others that the City should stay abreast of, review, comment and assist in making it as good as it can be.

Each of these is discussed on the following pages.

Figure 2-1. Example of Strategic Action Corridors running through downtown
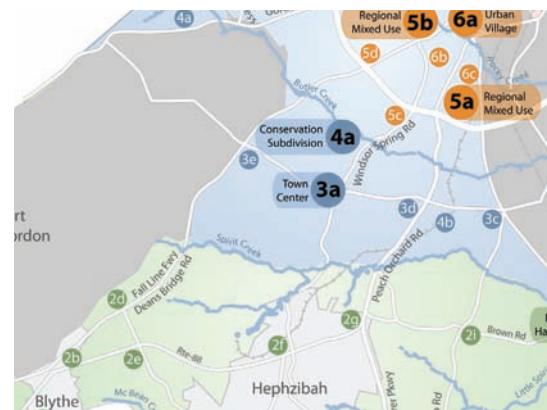
Figure 2-2. Sampling of potential sites for Prototype Projects
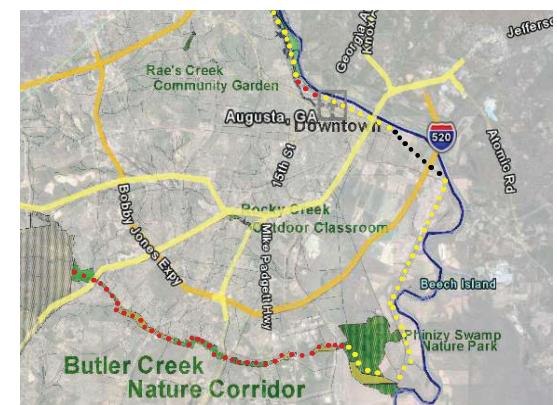
Figure 2-3. For example, the Central Savannah River Land Trust's Regional Greenway plans

1.1 Strategic Action Corridors

Corridors serve movement, aesthetic and economic purposes and the enhancement policies should be applied to corridors city-wide. However, within Augusta, several individual major corridors stand out, each having its own thematic purpose. These have unique qualities and attributes on which to focus energy and build connections and identity for all of Augusta.

Six corridors are included in this Agenda:

• **"Augusta Way"**, from the downtown Riverwalk to Rocky Creek, through this Agenda Priority Development District

• The **Gordon Highway Job**s Corridor, Augusta's Technology Highway

• **Westobou Trace**, from Bush Field through the downtown to I-20

• The **Riverwatch Parkway**, through the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area

• **Tobacco Road** connecting Fort Gordon with Bush Field

• The **Farm to City Scenic Trail** running from Rocky Creek south into Rural Augusta

Others, particularly along Wheeler Road and Wrightsboro Road are also worthy of attention. Given that they are both in strong market areas, they will benefit from strong application of the current commercial landscaping regulations and efforts should continue to find funding for public right of way landscaping.
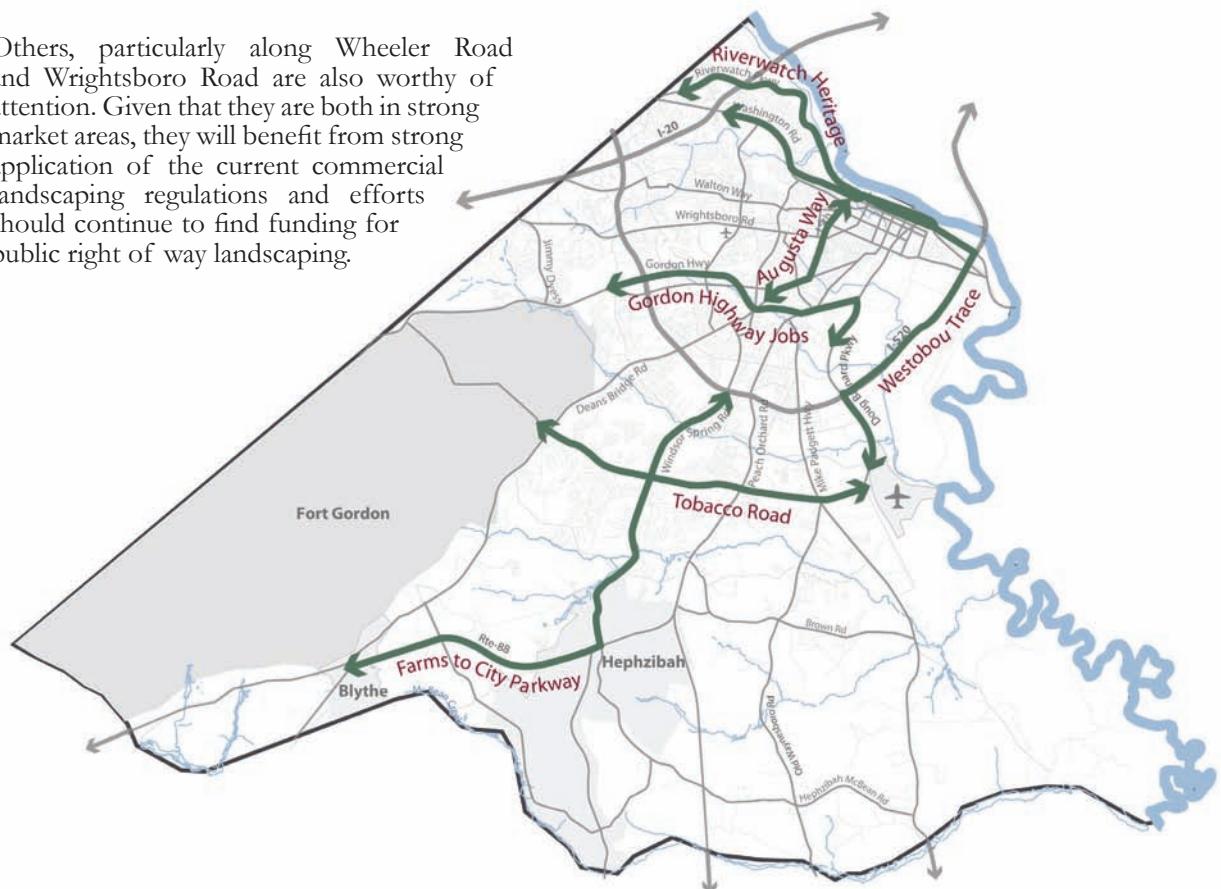
Figure 2-4. Augusta's Strategic Action Corridors

"Augusta Way" is in this Agenda's Priority Development District

This is Augusta's new grand boulevard, the first in more than one hundred years. It may not look like much now, but it could become a vibrant link between the downtown to the rest of the city.
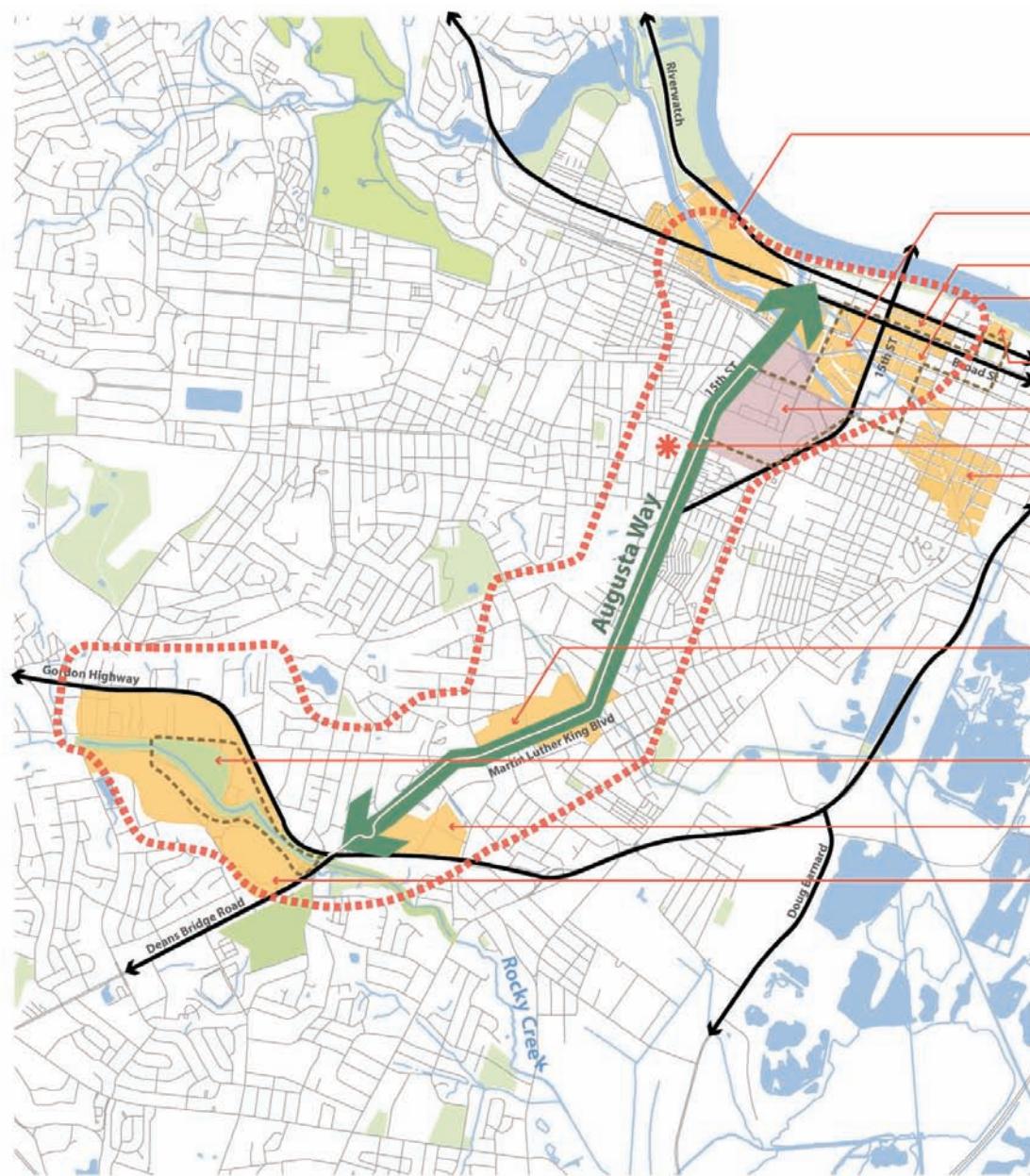
The intersection of Deans Bridge Road and the Gordon Highway, along Rocky Creek in south Suburban Augusta, is the population center of the city. The three-mile corridor linking this area to the historic downtown, the civic, cultural and entertainment center of Augusta, represents a unique opportunity to apply sustainable development principles to expand and rebuild the city's urban area, from the river to Rocky Creek. This central location is the natural growth path for the city. "Augusta Way" will be the strategic roadway corridor passing along the length of the proposed Priority Development District, that extends from Rocky

Creek in the south to the downtown Riverwalk in the north. "Augusta Way" is envisioned as a grand boulevard with multiple transportation ways, accommodating transit, pedestrians, bikes, and cars and the central spine for the City's urban expansion southward. It runs the length of Fifteenth Street, following the US 1/ Georgia Highway 4 alignment, onto Martin Luther King Boulevard, a short segment of Milledgeville Road, then onto Deans Bridge Road, past the Southgate area, to a proposed massive anchor development at Rocky Creek. It is envisioned that this corridor will become the green spine for new residential neighborhoods developed at urban densities along its flanks.

View of 15th Street, looking north, showing the opportunity that awaits

A proposed transit line would loop around the Rocky Creek project area, head up "Augusta Way" to the Medical College and on into downtown.

Harrisburg Village

St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park

Marbury Village

Canal Park Neighborhood

Westobou Arts Center

Medical Area

Paine College

Dyess Park Canal Village

ASDA PROJECT: Oates Creek Neighborhood Revitalization

New Regional Park

ASDA PROJECT: Southgate Urban Village

ASDA PROJECT: Rocky Creek Regional Mixed-Use

Existing Park

Project Area

ASDA Priority Development District

Corridor Improvements

"Augusta Way"

Illustrative "Augusta Way" Treatment Options
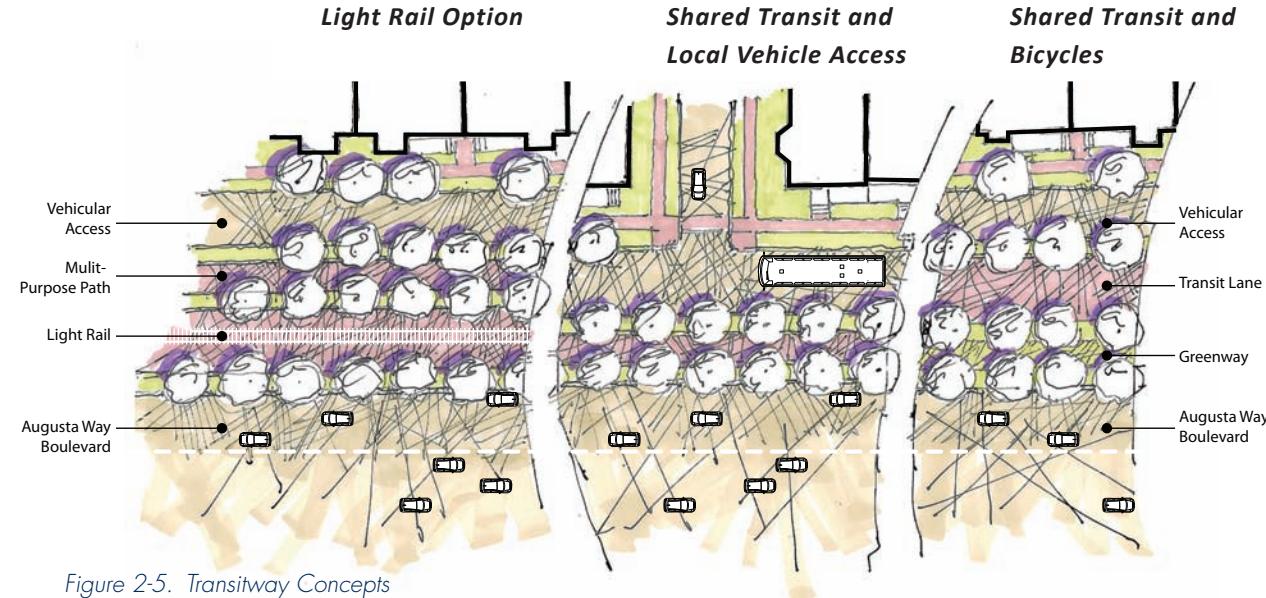
Figure 2-5. Transitway Concepts

The Designated Greenway and Transit way

This corridor would build upon a current Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) roadway improvement project, adding full bike lanes (multi-purpose path), additional boulevard-style landscaping and adequate space to consider a designated transit-way when there is adequate demand along its length. The Agenda calls for close coordination with Georgia DOT to insure for a continuous tree canopy along its length and a planted median.

To this end, the Agenda proposes that the City establish a Greenway and Transit way corridor, requiring a 65-foot building setback from the edge of the Georgia DOT curb on the west side of that segment of the final roadway alignment that lies between Wrightsboro Road the Gordon Highway. The historic Shiloh facility, portions of which lie within this corridor, will be protected and incorporated into the final corridor development plans.

Illustrative treatment options are shown in the diagrams above. The Transit way concepts range from a full light rail line service, to 10 to 15 passenger, rubber-tired, low speed electric vehicles sharing right of way with either local access automobile traffic or in a shared path with bicycles. See "Figure 2-5. Transitway Concepts" on page 2-44.
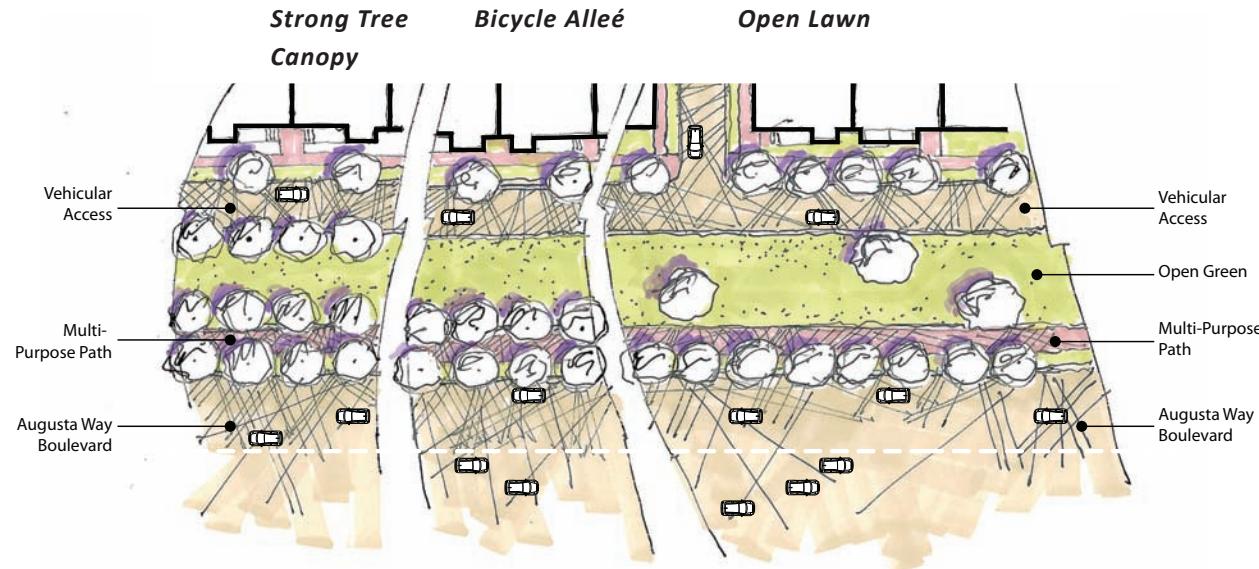
Figure 2-6. Greenway Concepts

If public transportation continues to use the local roadway, the corridor becomes and true greenway, complete with multipurpose path. The illustration shows three basic landscape approaches, heavily treed to mostly open lawn, any and all of which could be placed along the corridor. See "Figure 2-6. Greenway Concepts" on page 2-45.

Key elements in each of these options are that a safe multipurpose path linking north to south is built; the denser, new housing is well buffered from the main thoroughfare; and a there is a continuous row of tree plantings along the roadway. With near continuous development adjacent this corridor, it can be a very agreeable and safe urban park corridor, a great place to bike, run or lounge about.

Potential Transitway / Greenway

Roadway

| 5' | 6' | | 8' | 12' | 8' | | 26' | 15' | 26' | | 8' | 10' |

Property Line · Sidewalk · Planting Strip · Rain Garden · Multi-Purpose Path · Travel Lanes (2) · Center Median · Travel Lanes (2) · Sidewalk · Property Line

60' Multi-Modal Greenway Zone

85' Public Right-of-Way
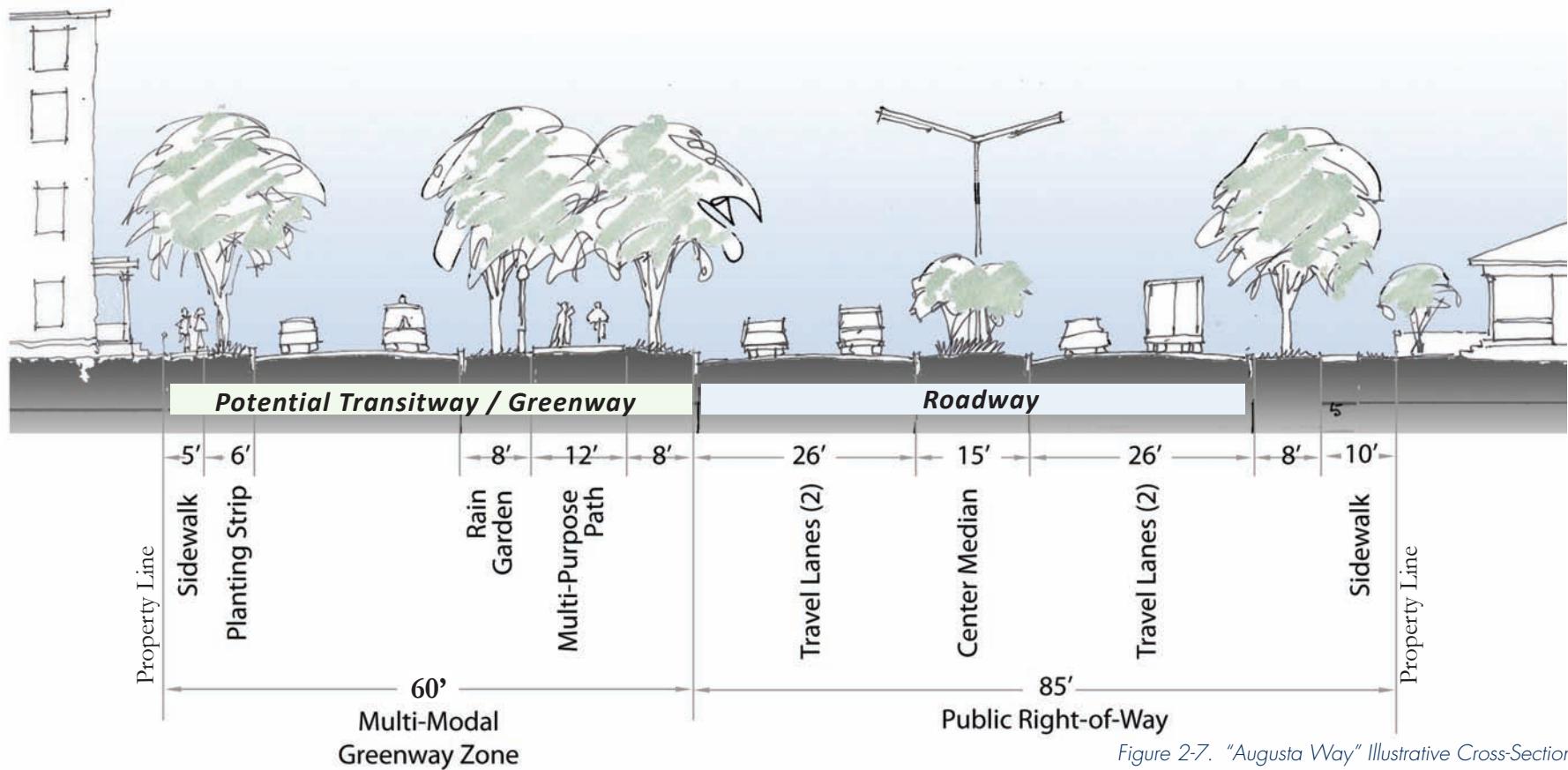
Figure 2-7. "Augusta Way" Illustrative Cross-Section

Connecting the whole

This Agenda Priority Development District has a north side and a south side and other Strategic Action Corridors run through it. Both ends have strong anchors, the downtown in the north and the nucleus formed by new developments at Rocky Creek and Southgate in the south. "Augusta Way" links the two together. "Figure 2-7. "Augusta Way" Illustrative Cross-Section" on page 2-46 below shows how a linear park fits in.

Assuming the Rocky Creek area can develop as a major live, work, and play destination, it can also serve as a transit hub for loop routes around the entire southern part of the City. Putting the Gordon highway on a "road diet", at least between Highland and Peach Orchard, by creating a well landscaped boulevard in this area, will improve the identity of areas east and west, while making the area safer for walkers, cyclists and motorists alike.

Legend:

- Phase II Development
- Neighborhood Infill / Rehab
- Open Space
- Mixed Use Infill / Rehab
- Potential Transit Line

Southside

Augusta

Cherry Tree Crossing

15th Street

TW Josey High School

Olive Road

Martin Luther King Blvd

#5b Rocky Creek

10 Min Walk (½ Mile)

Milledgeville Rd

5 Min Walk (¼ Mile)

#7a Oates Creek

Jenkins White Elementary

Murphey Middle School

Wilkinson Gardens Elementary

Dogwood Terrace

5 Min Walk (¼ Mile)

#6a Southgate

ROCKY CREEK

Deans Bridge Rd

Peach Orchard

Gordon Highway

Southside of the Priority Development District

Figure 2-8. Prototype Projects and areas for targeted neighborhood revitalization
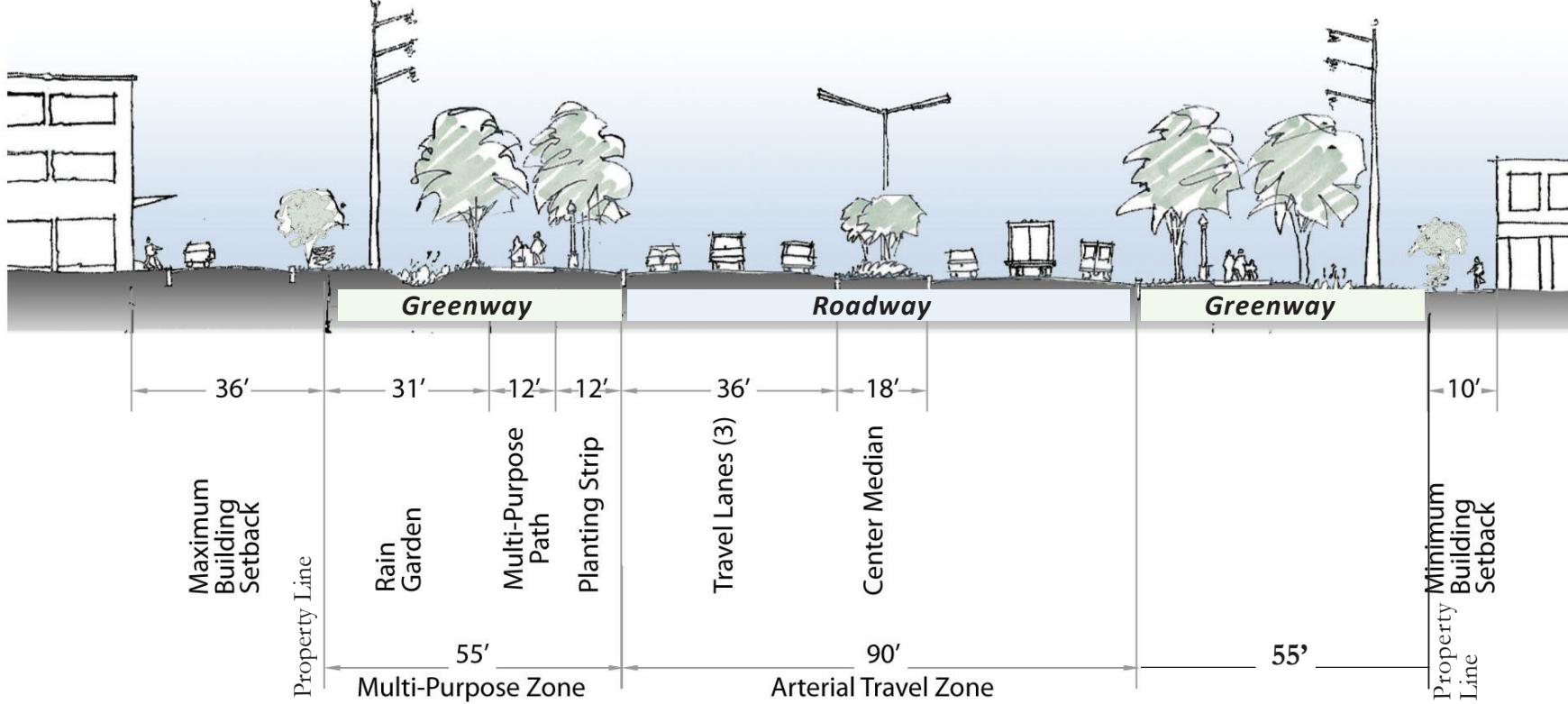
Figure 2-9. Gordon Highway on a "road diet"

Diagram labels:

Greenway | **Roadway** | **Greenway**

36' — 31' — 12' — 12' — 36' — 18' — 10'

Maximum Building Setback | Property Line | Rain Garden | Multi-Purpose Path | Planting Strip | Travel Lanes (3) | Center Median | Property Line | Minimum Building Setback

55' Multi-Purpose Zone | 90' Arterial Travel Zone | 55'
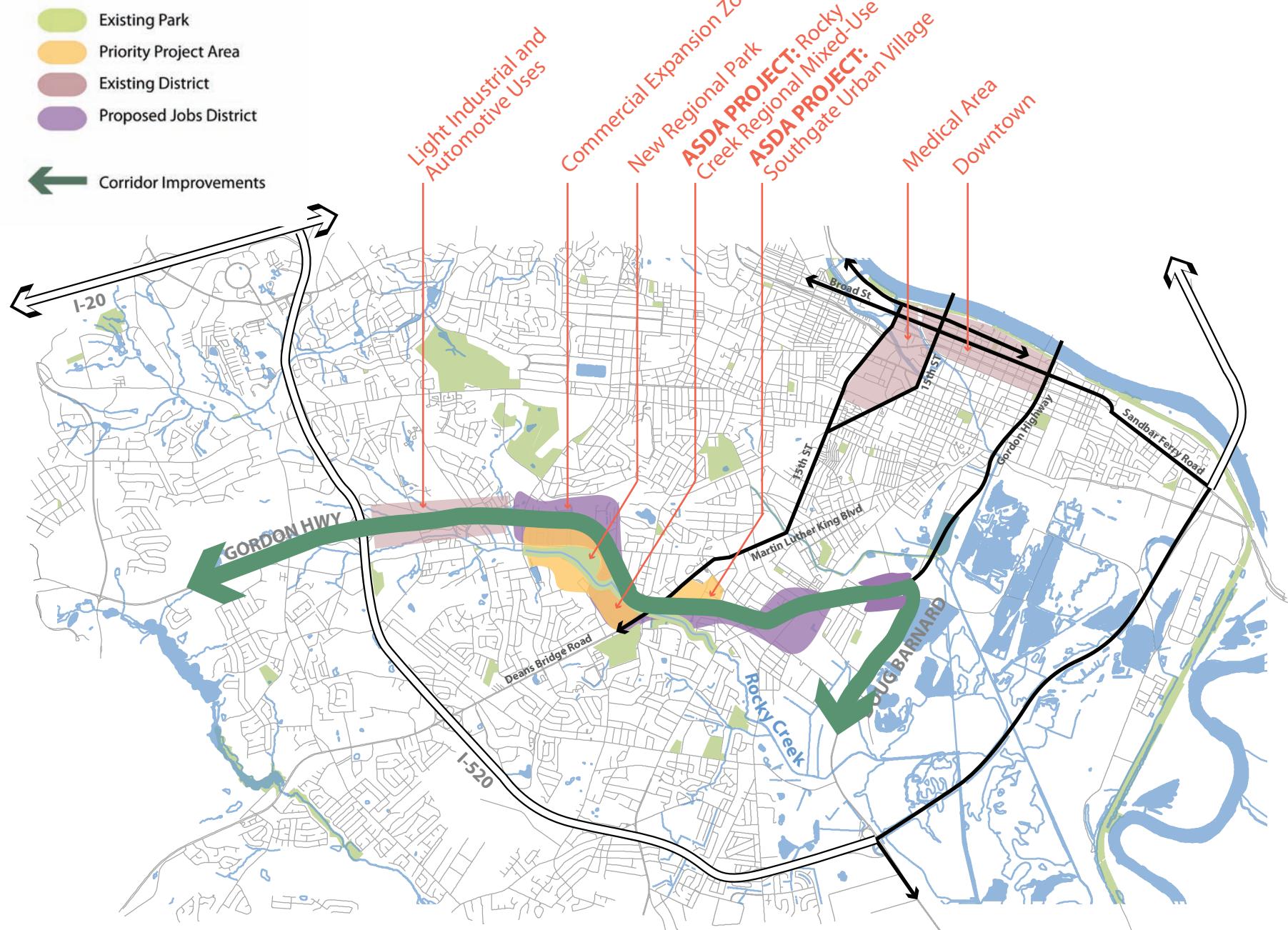
The Gordon Highway Jobs Corridor

The Gordon Highway's days as an important retail corridor may be over, however, this corridor is centrally located, has good access both locally and to the interstate system, and is convenient to a highly trained workforce, living the surrounding subdivisions. By focusing energy and effort on rethinking and marketing this corridor, along with an extension to the regional airport, this area can be branded and marketed as a unique place to locate new businesses. Given its proximity to both Fort Gordon, the medical area and its easy access to the energy research facilities of the Savannah River Site, this can be Augusta's technology highway.

Existing Park

Priority Project Area

Existing District

Proposed Jobs District

Corridor Improvements

Light Industrial and Automotive Uses

Commercial Expansion Zone

New Regional Park

ASDA PROJECT: Rocky Creek Regional Mixed-Use

ASDA PROJECT: Southgate Urban Village

Medical Area

Downtown

I-20

GORDON HWY

Broad St

15th St

15th St

Gordon Highway

Sandbar Ferry Road

Martin Luther King Blvd

Deans Bridge Road

Rocky Creek

DOUG BARNARD

I-520

Gordon Highway

The Westobou Trace

Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field serves the entire region. Three airlines serving this facility with flights from the east and mid west, is a major gateway into Augusta. While the airport is attractive, today there is no appealing route into downtown or destinations beyond. The Westobou Trace links several roadways into a path from the airport. This route traces along Doug Bernard Parkway, past Phinizy Swamp nature area, to I-520, through the proposed I-520 to Sandbar Ferry Road gateway enhancements, onto Sandbar Ferry, to Broad Street, through the downtown and Harrisburg, past Lake Olmstead, on the Washington Road, passing by the Augusta National Golf Club, right on Alexander where it links up to the Riverwatch Parkway.

The Westobou Trace, in addition to being an efficient way into the city, has many interesting and beautiful places along the way. In areas, the swamp is on either side. These give way to the open expanse of the Merryland brick ponds.

Downtown Augusta, along heavily treed Broad Street, is a mile long stretch of beautiful 19th and 20th century buildings and includes the James Brown statue. Harrisburg is home to two of three of the city's magnificent mill buildings, and the Confederate Powder Works Chimney, the nation's only remaining artifact of Confederate era construction. Chaffee Park and the First Level Canal are here as well. The new Kroc Center and many historic houses are found here along upper Broad Street. Lake Olmstead, its casino and park are jewels in the crown. Further west, one passes by the main entry to the world famous Augusta National Golf Club, its park-like parking area, and finally out onto Riverwatch, and a short hop to I-20.

Most importantly, through the proposed Sandbar Ferry Gateway, this trace passes by a number of the Market Creation Projects identified in the Westobou Vision Urban Area and it can serve as a catalyst for realizing these projects. They include Sandbar Ferry Village and Park, the Augusta Arts Center/District, Marbury Village, Harrisburg Canal Village.

Once a year the world makes the pilgrimage to the Masters. Most only see the strip commercial development along Washington Road and they never see or enjoy the rest of Augusta. The Westobou Trace could change that.

Entrance to Bush Fields, with a great on-the-ground example of an existing "Landscape Highlight Area"

Strategic Action Corridors

Potential ANGC Visitor Facility

Augusta Natl. Golf Club

ASDA PROJECT: Upper Broad Street

Historic Sibley Mill

Medical Area

Downtown

Olde Town

15th ST

13th ST

BROAD ST HWY

GORDON HWY

7c

7d

SANDBAR FERRY

Sandbar Ferry Riverside Project

ASDA PROJECT: Sandbar Ferry Identity Gateway

I-520

Scenic Merryland Brick Ponds

Phinizy Swamp Viewing Area

I-520

DOUG BARNARD

3c

TOBACCO RD

Augusta Regional Airport and Identity Gateway

Existing Park

Project Area

Proposed Identity Gateway

Corridor Improvements

Riverwatch Parkway

The Riverwatch Parkway runs from Columbia County under I-20 and follows the path of the Savannah River arriving into downtown along Broad Street, Jones Street and Greene Street into the heart of historic Augusta. Today, this is the preferred scenic route into the downtown for people coming via I-20 into the area. The parkway has a sinuous and bucolic feel to it as it passes through forest and over the historic First Level Canal and Raes Creek en route to downtown. This is where the visitor first sees to historic mills and the Powder Works Chimney and the steeples of the city beyond. This is where Augusta's historic connection to the river and the canal system can be well introduced.

The Agenda recommends that the Parkway be treated much like the beautiful George Washington Parkway in the nation's capital. Riverwatch Parkway runs through the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area and has the opportunity for scenic view pullout in several locations. One site in particular, strategically located just east of the Raes Creek Bridge, off the inbound lane, has the potential to be a beautiful spot to orient the visitor to the city and its history. It has excellent views of the mills and chimney, ready access to the canal bank, and even the potential, via a short walk down a proposed trial, to see Raes Creek and the river.
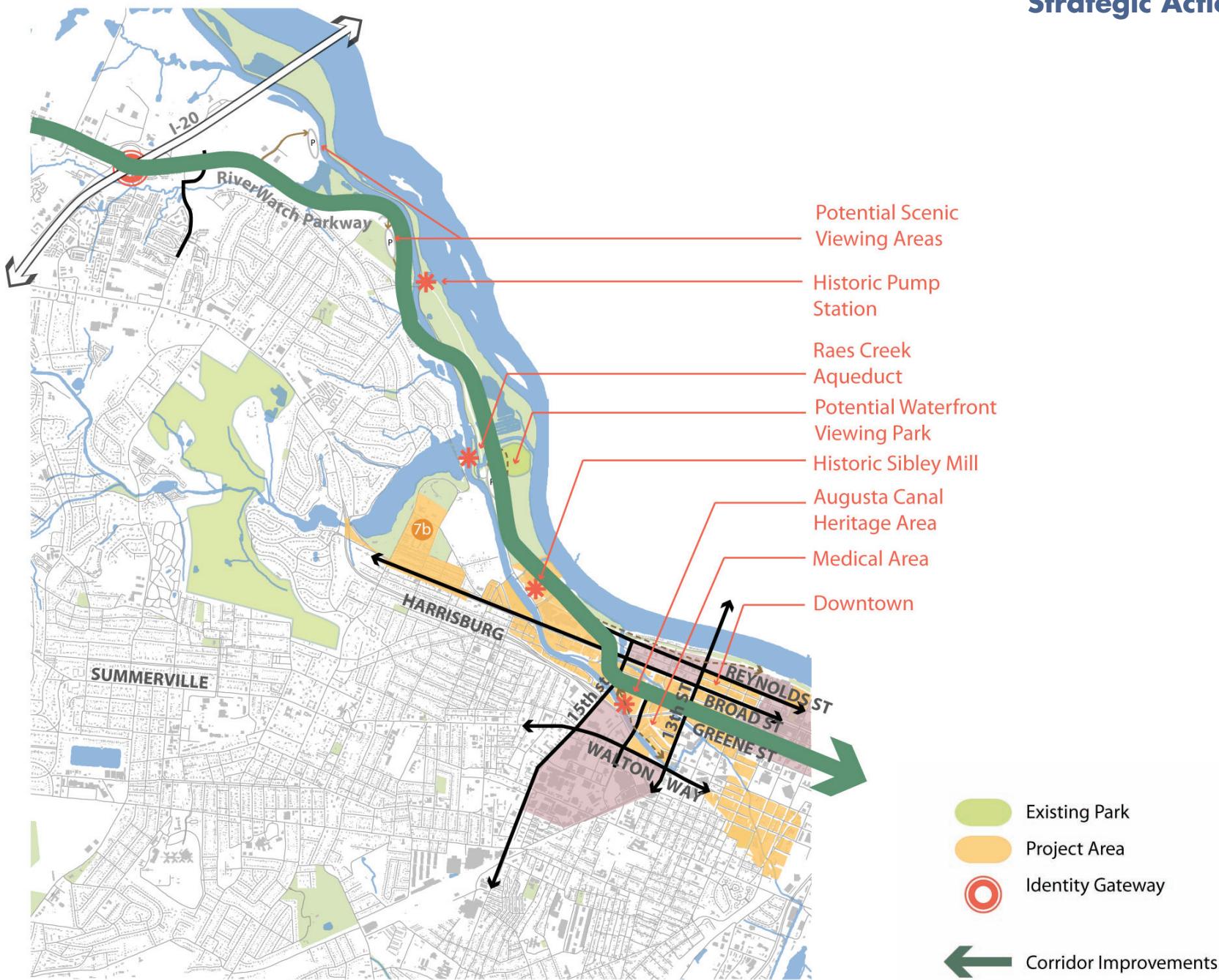
This site is large enough for short-term parking. Interpretive panels or even an information and orientation kiosk, staffed by the Canal Authority and Visitor and Convention Bureau, should be considered here. Gateway signs and Garden City "Landscape Highlight Areas" would be placed at either end of the Riverwatch. These landscaping programs are discussed in further detail in Appendix 2.

View of the Sibley Mill from along the parkway

Potential Scenic
Viewing Areas

Historic Pump
Station

Raes Creek
Aqueduct

Potential Waterfront
Viewing Park

Historic Sibley Mill

Augusta Canal
Heritage Area

Medical Area

Downtown

I-20

RiverWatch Parkway

7b

HARRISBURG

SUMMERVILLE

15th ST

13th ST

REYNOLDS ST

BROAD ST

GREENE ST

WALTON WAY
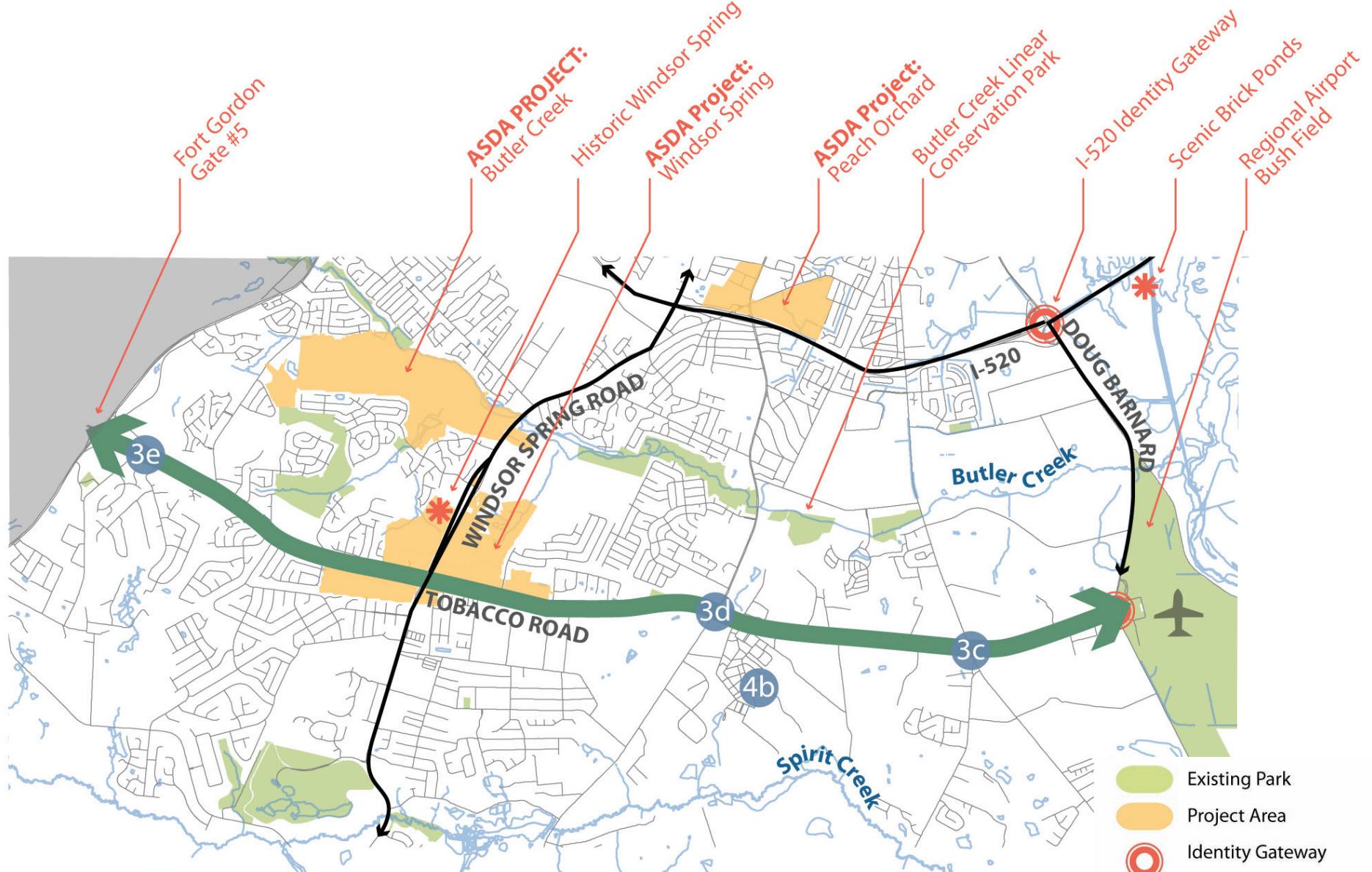
Riverwatch Heritage Gateway

Existing Park

Project Area

Identity Gateway

Corridor Improvements

Fort Gordon Gate #5

ASDA PROJECT: Butler Creek

Historic Windsor Spring

ASDA Project: Windsor Spring

ASDA Project: Peach Orchard

Butler Creek Linear Conservation Park

I-520 Identity Gateway

Scenic Brick Ponds

Regional Airport Bush Field

WINDSOR SPRING ROAD

I-520

DOUG BARNARD

Butler Creek

TOBACCO ROAD

3e

3d

4b

3c

Spirit Creek

Tobacco Road

Existing Park

Project Area

Identity Gateway

Corridor Improvements

Tobacco Road

Today, the road along the ridge has morphed, from the narrow rut along which tobacco was hauled to the river, into a multi-lane freeway linking Fort Gordon directly to Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field. This is the main route to the fort for people coming here on business from all over the world.

Today, its appearance is stark and devoid in particular of any significant landscaping along the roadway. Generally a straight line, the eight mile roadway has two lanes in each direction, with a center turn lane and with marginal curb cut control.

With proper planning this centrally located east-west corridor could become an attractive parkway with thriving business development at key intersections. Several of these are noted in this Agenda as "other potential project locations". These include for Town Center projects, the intersection of Peach Orchard and Tobacco Road (#3d), the intersection of Mike Padgett and Tobacco Road (#3c), and the area around the Fort Gorden entrance gate number five (#3e). The Gracewood site also has the potential to become a Conservation-Lifestyle Subdivision (#4b) after it is decommissioned as a medical hospital.

Further, the intersection of Windsor Spring and Tobacco Road is a designated Prototype Project site (#3a) in this Agenda. As such, Tobacco Road would become a Garden City Corridor through that area, complete with landscaped median and edges, as well as the site of a Garden City "Landscape Highlight Area".

These landscaping programs are discussed in further detail in Appendix 2.

Existing conditions near Fort Gordon entry gate #5, on Tobacco Road

Historic Liberty Methodist Church in Hephzibah, GA built in 1804.

Historic general store in rural Blythe hamlet

Active farm scene and orchard near Blythe, GA
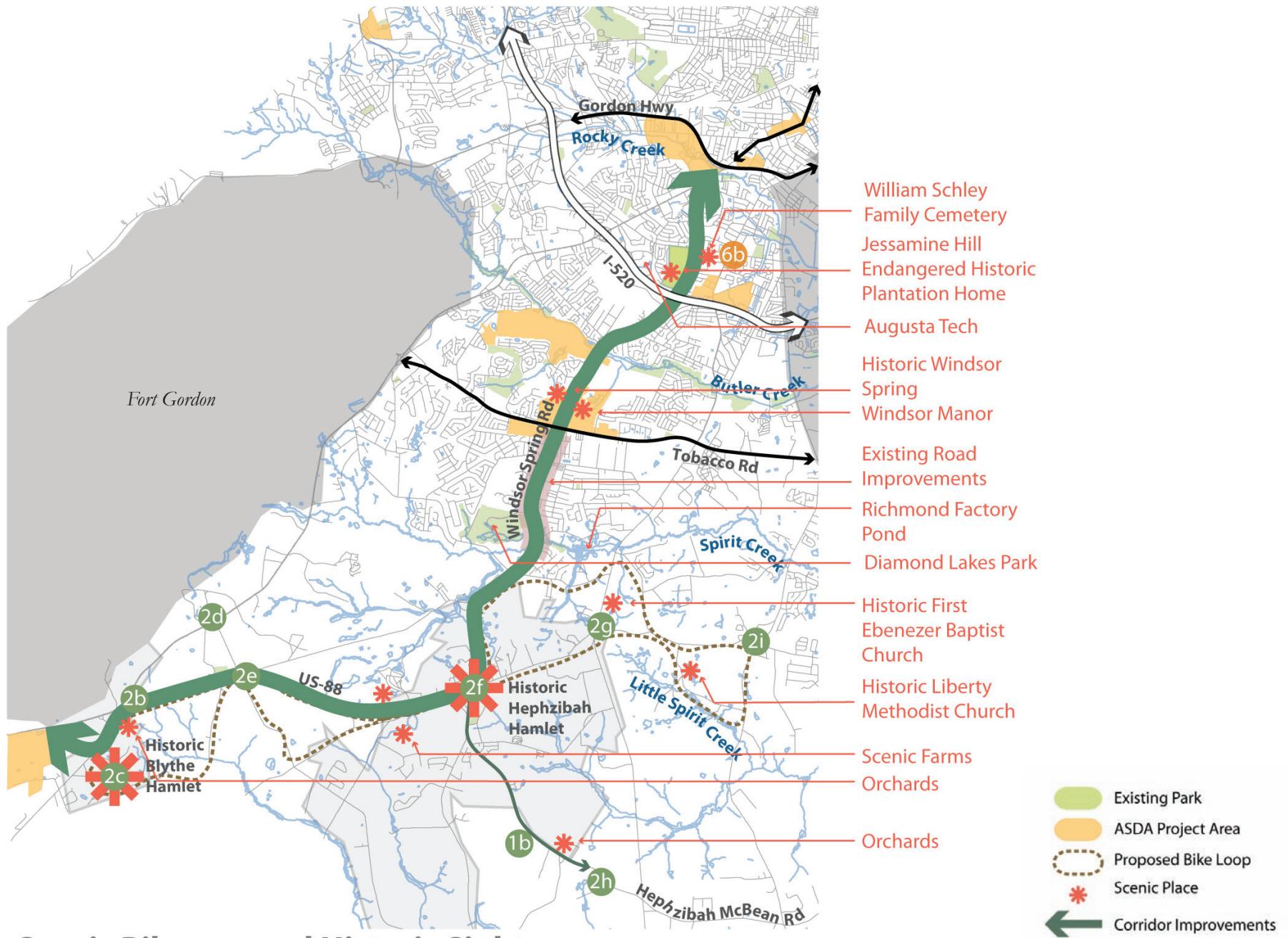
View at the end of Church Road in Blythe, GA

The Farms to City Scenic Trail

Today there is no visually attractive connection between downtown and the southern part of the City, nor is there a route that cyclists can safely take from one end of Augusta to the other. The "Farms to City Trail" is designed to be a set of centrally located north-south roadways which connect and could, over time be made into a very attractive alternative route cutting through Suburban and Rural Augusta. Beginning at the Rocky Creek site, it links up with Windsor Springs Road, where the Augusta Regional Transit System (ARTS) road widening project includes bike lanes, and arrives in Rural Augusta and onto Route-88 to Blythe.

A scenic bike trail accompanies the southern most end of the corridor that travels between the historic hamlets of Blythe and Hephzibah and along Little Spirit Creek, passing historic churches and scenic farms along the way.

William Schley Family Cemetery

Jessamine Hill Endangered Historic Plantation Home

Augusta Tech

Historic Windsor Spring

Windsor Manor

Existing Road Improvements

Richmond Factory Pond

Diamond Lakes Park

Historic First Ebenezer Baptist Church

Historic Liberty Methodist Church

Scenic Farms

Orchards

Orchards

Scenic Bikeway and Historic Sights

Existing Park

ASDA Project Area

Proposed Bike Loop

Scenic Place

Corridor Improvements

Development Projects by Type

As investigations and tours through the city were undertaken, and in developing the Sustainable Development framework, several "types" of development projects emerged. These were mapped and one or two of each type were chosen for further study and illustration. The criteria for selection included:

• Ability to serve as an example of the type.

• Easy transfer of the findings, approaches and recommendations of this example to similar sites elsewhere in Augusta.

• Importance of the particular site in achieving the goals of the Agenda, and "making a real difference".

• Financial feasibility and ease of development.

It is important to note that these projects are presented to illustrate concepts and methods for achieving desired outcomes across the city. Project locations were chosen without regard to current ownership, current use, or possible environmental issues. That said, the major project sites have both intrinsic and strategic value and thus are favored sites for actual implementation. These are important sites unto themselves and for the City as a whole. Further study of each is required, which would typically be done through development of an Area Action Plan as actual development activities commence.

This smart growth agenda identifies key Project Types, that set new directions in the way that future development can be done to protect Augusta's valuable resources, to encourage more efficient and sustainable uses and to create attractive and enjoyable places to live, work and play. These Project types include:

In Rural Augusta

1. Farmland Preservation Communities

2. Clustered, Rural Hamlets

In Suburban Augusta

3. Walkable Town Centers

4. Conservation-Lifestyle Subdivisions

5. Regional Mixed Use Developments

6. Repositioning Marginal Suburban Retail Strips

In Urban Augusta

7. Urban Neighborhood Revitalization

8. Major Gateway Interchanges

Westobou Vision- all Market Creation Projects and initiatives

Each of these Projects Types is described in greater detail on the following pages. An illustrative example, aka Priority Projects, of each of these types has been developed and analyzed. While each is summarized in this section, a greater description can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 2-10. The Projects

LEGEND:

Prototypical Project

#a Other Potential Project Locations
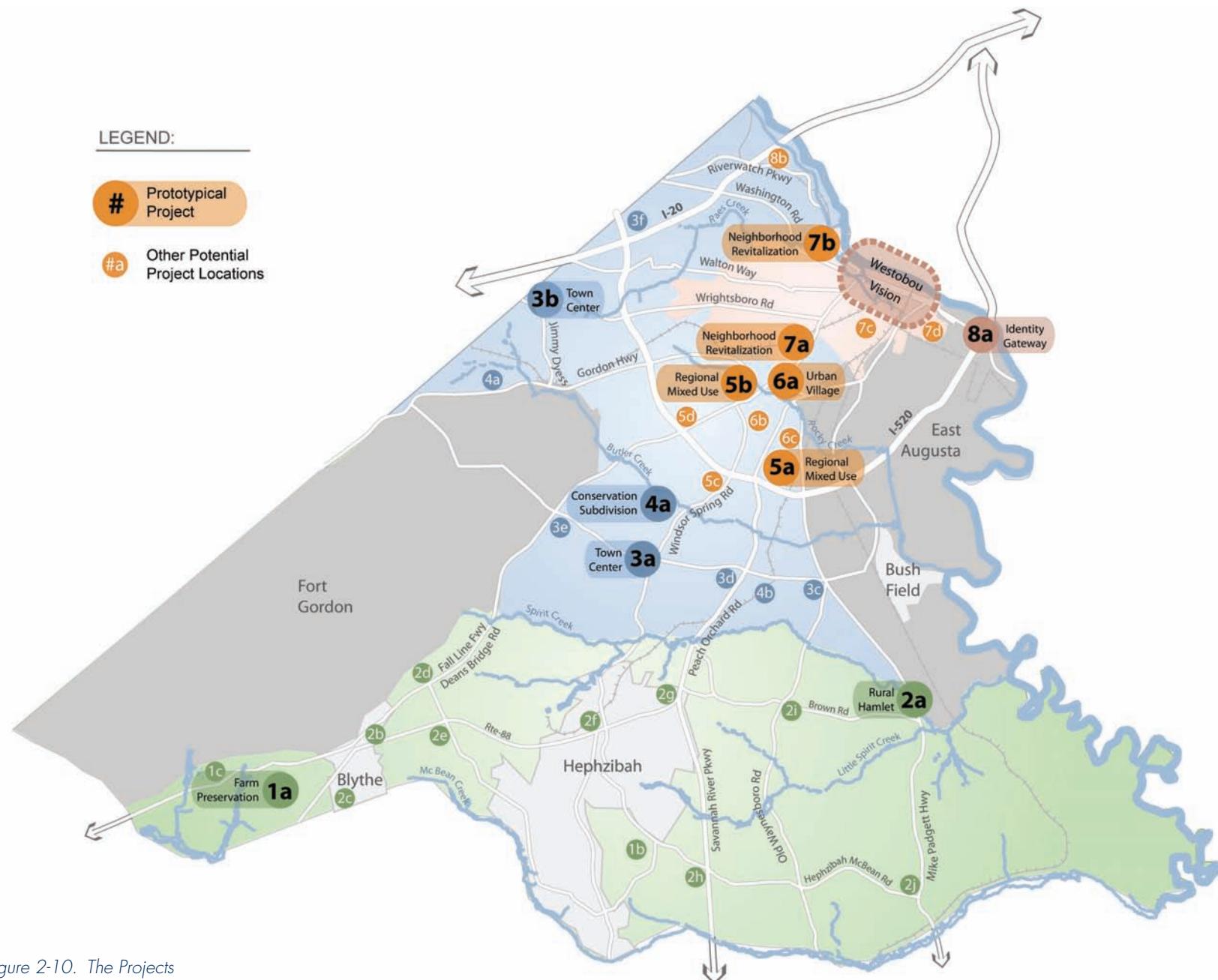
In Rural Augusta

Rural Augusta is the name given the area generally below Spirit Creek, without public sewer.

Issues for the Next Two Decades

Current agricultural methodologies and economics make future dominance of traditional farming in this area difficult, despite the fact that much of the area has high quality soil suitable for a variety of crops. The state agricultural area has designated tree farming as the priority agricultural activity for this area.

The land here is comparatively cheap. Farms are slowly getting sold off to residential builders, and typical sprawling tract home development is encroaching on the area. Not only does this use the land in very inefficient ways, it destroys attractive view corridors, and necessitates inefficient public infrastructure, with their associated costs borne by the public at large.

Georgia Power is planning and designing a major expansion of their nuclear energy generating site just south of Augusta in Burke County. The city of Augusta should remain vigilant for the issues and opportunities that might arise from these actions.

Cotton crop near the Burke County line

Looking forward, several objectives for the area are worthwhile:

- Preservation of as much as possible of the rural character of this area for the enjoyment of all.

- Protection of key "image making" properties.

- Designation of a system of attractive and safe roadways and bicycle trails within this area and connection of these northward to the more urbanized part of the City.

- Development of programs to encourage local food production and to educate the kids and grown-ups about farming and our food chain.

The following two key illustrative projects show how policies applied across Rural Augusta might better preserve its unique resources and character while offering more well-rounded access to goods and services and creating attractive, residential alternatives.

Key Projects and Initiatives

Several potential projects were noted. Public initiatives include a possible sewer line extension into this area, which this Agenda discourages. A roadway improvement project is proposed for southern section of the Mike Padgett Parkway. The expansion of **Plant Vogtle**, to the south in Burke County, fuels speculation that there will be demand for new housing in this area. Operations at **Fort Gordon** need to be considered when thinking about further development near their boundary.

Assets to Build Upon

The villages of Hepzibah and Blythe have a rural charm that should be preserved and enhanced. There are vast acres of undeveloped land and tree farms that provide important natural habitat. Spirit, Little Spirit and McBean Creeks run through this area. There are orchards and large open fields of pasture land and for growing hay for the area's substantial equestrian community.

Potential Champion Groups

As of this writing, no group has come forward and shown commitment to the preservation of the character of this area. Ultimately, it is up to the people living here to determine its future. Many people live here because of its rural pace of that lifestyle and they may want to get involved. The Central Savannah River Land Trust is a logical leader, however, their focus and limited funding go towards waterway protection. The city should organize a series of public sessions in this area to further explore issues and opportunities directly with the community.


Hay, ready for the winter

Project Type 1
Farmland Preservation

There exists today a hand full of large and beautiful farms in Rural Augusta. Rather than witness these properties slowly be whittled away at the edges by incremental subdivision or frontage construction, the city should work to reposition and reuse these properties in such a way that their special qualities, e.g. functions, view sheds, significant structures are preserved for future generations. The following is an illustrative example of might be done on one of Augusta's finest farms.

#1a: Fall Line Farm
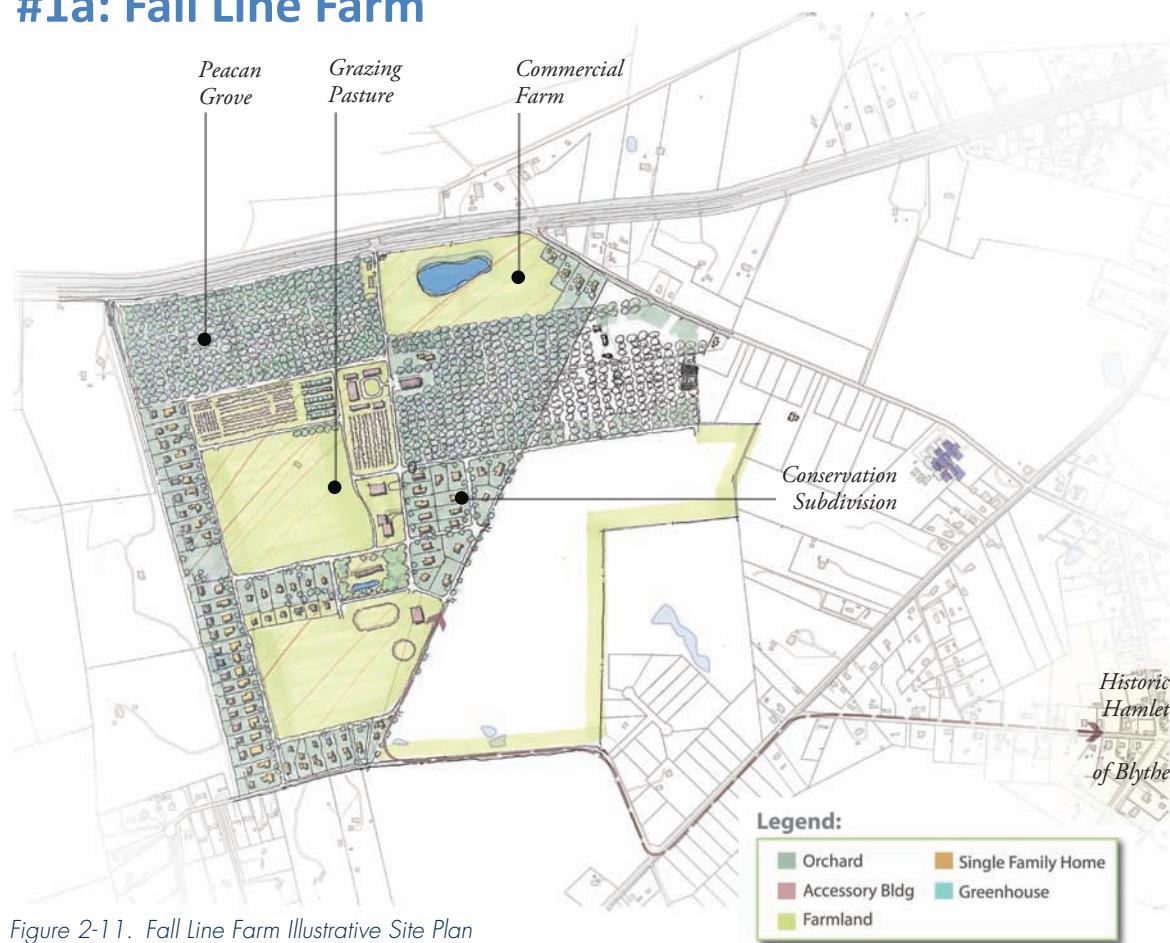
Figure 2-11. Fall Line Farm Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

This is ultimately a farmlands preservation program. The strategy embodies three key components:

- Preservation and enhancement of core farm operations including the pecan orchards, pasture land, hay bundling and local, organic commercial fruit and vegetable production. This would also serve as a demonstration farm for educational purposes, serving local school kids, on site visits and pick your own fruits and vegetables.

- A 70-home conservation subdivision, with a rural and equestrian lifestyle theme, with on-site stabling.

- An equestrian center with training facilities and commercial stables. Pasture and services would be interconnected with homeownership in this community.

The Big Idea

On a large farmstead adjacent to the Fall Line Freeway, create a productive and interactive agricultural destination showing off the beauty of Augusta's rural landscape, while commercially growing significant amounts of local produce, and converting a small portion of the land to supporting "rural lifestyle" residential use.

*Figure 2-12. Saturday morning activities at Fall Line Farm*
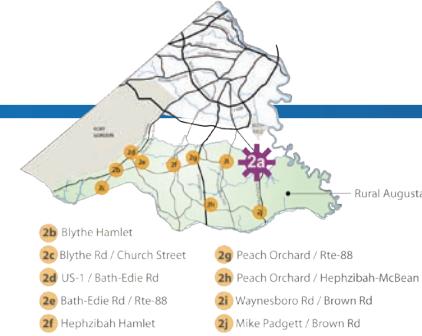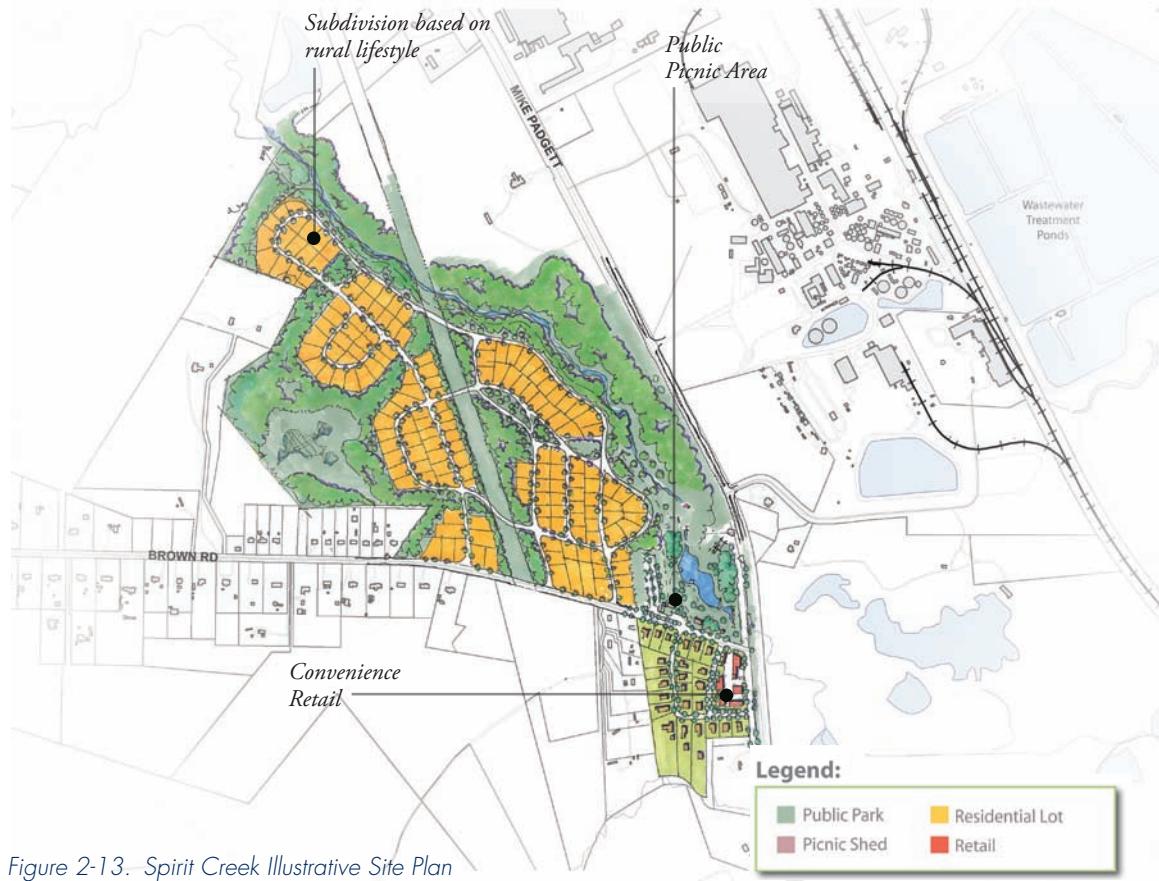
Project Type 2

Rural Cluster Developments

Traditionally, rural communities came together at roadway intersections. Often, the first impression of a place is formed here. The country store, other businesses, and non-farming families built close to this node of activity, and farmland occupied the area between the nodes. This was efficient use of land and energy. It still can be. To the extent the city can refocus rural, residential development at intersections, it should.

2b Blythe Hamlet
2c Blythe Rd / Church Street
2d US-1 / Bath-Edie Rd
2e Bath-Edie Rd / Rte-88
2f Hephzibah Hamlet

2g Peach Orchard / Rte-88
2h Peach Orchard / Hephzibah-McBean
2i Waynesboro Rd / Brown Rd
2j Mike Padgett / Brown Rd

#2a: Spirit Creek Rural Hamlet

Subdivision based on rural lifestyle

Public Picnic Area

MIKE PADGETT

Wastewater Treatment Ponds

BROWN RD

Convenience Retail

Legend:
- Public Park
- Picnic Shed
- Residential Lot
- Retail

Figure 2-13. Spirit Creek Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

This illustrative, proto-type project lies on land at the intersection of two important roads, Mike Padgett Parkway and Brown Road.

The private development program is a 'hamlet conservation sub-division", comprised of a small commercial node at the intersection, with gas station, convenience store and miscellaneous commercial space totaling 10,000sf, a cluster of 24 units of houses bordering the commercial area and, across the road, a 140 unit single family community, bordering Spirit Creek.

Regarding public improvements, this area is well located to provide passive parkland for much of rural Augusta and a park and potential trail are proposed adjacent Spirit Creek. Additionally, Brown Road should have a strong canopy of street trees within the hamlet segment

The Big Idea

Create a new hamlet, at Brown Road and the Mike Padgett Highway, near Spirit Creek. Small and compact, it would contain three to four businesses and approximately 160 homes, some with adequate land for a vegetable garden. A new local park, adjacent to Spirit Creek, will become part of the larger open space network, as well as an important leisure area for those living nearby. Given the number of other houses in the area, this hamlet would be a significant node along this corridor. Also, there is adequate undeveloped land nearby, on which conservation subdivisions could be realized, which this hamlet would serve.

Figure 2-14. Looking across Brown Road to the new Hamlet

In Suburban Augusta

Suburban Augusta is the part of Augusta mostly developed after World War II, including the areas commonly known as West Augusta, South Augusta and Belair. It is framed by the urban area to the north, Spirit Creek to the south, Columbia County to the west and the Mike Padget Parkway to the east.

Issues for the Next Two Decades

Commercial Corridors

This is an area with large, unattractive arterial highways with large transmission lines overhead and unkempt road shoulders and medians. State highway maintenance for its grassed and landscaped areas is inadequate. The city has eliminated much of its own upkeep capability. These corridors set the image of the city for citizens and visitors alike.

Many of the private business along these arterial corridors are closed or marginal at best, due in part to the availability of cheap land along these corridors, which led to overbuilding.

This leaves the land along these corridors under-utilized. Sign controls are ineffective where there is not sufficient market to justify the level of reinvestment that triggers the improvement ordinances, including not only better signage, but also better landscape treatments.

Residential Suburbs

Since the late 1940's, subdivision development in Suburban Augusta has been continuous. With the exception of a few pockets, most has been targeted to middle class buyers. The combination of this market and the availability of cheap land has spurred developers and buyers to move ever further outward from the city core. Several of the older subdivisions are much less attractive for potential buyers, and more homes are becoming rental properties with only minimal maintenance and upkeep. Some large tracts, have whole blocks of housing that is inherently unmarketable to sections of the population with disposable income. Often, the population of these areas is mostly people who cannot afford to move elsewhere, who cannot reinvest in the property and who cannot sell for a price that would allow them to move.

Typically, these subdivisions are self-contained developments with one road in and out, thus limiting connectivity to neighbors, increasing travel distances and further burdening the arterial roadway system and the delivery of city services.

Assets to Build Upon

The majority of Augusta's population lives here. It has a well-trained, middle class core. There is significant disposable income in the area. While many of its subdivision neighborhoods are struggling, it has a strong network of neighborhood associations, which can be a great asset in revitalization of this central part of the city. This capacity should be expanded to include all residences under a neighborhood association of some type.

There is substantial capacity for new development, with an abundance of undeveloped and under developed land available in this area. It is estimated that the area can easily accommodate another 12,000 - 15,000 homes.

Empty Regency Mall is included in a proposed project at Rocky Creek

Typical Suburban Augusta residential neighborhood

The area is well served by both arterial and collector streets. Public sewer services are either in-place or can be readily extended. Schools are scattered throughout.

There are a number of key strategic locations on which to focus the Agenda's efforts over the next decade. These range from sites that are market ready to troubled sites, critically located, where public-private partnerships can be of enormous benefit to the immediate area and the city as a whole.

There are natural and historic resources on which to build, including Raes, Oates, Rocky, Butler and Spirit creeks, as well as the historic Windsor Spring and its associated farmstead.

Key Projects and Initiatives

Several ongoing public projects on which to build include the Georgia DOT funded Fifteenth Street, Wrightsboro Road and Windsor Spring Road improvements: the Corps of Engineers Rocky Creek flood control project: and the Augusta Housing Authority's redevelopment of Cherry Tree Crossing and Dogwood Terrace, plus the extensive construction programs at Fort Gordon and at the National Science Center

On the private side, several new residential developments are underway, particularly near the Gordon Highway.

Augusta Technical College is developing curricula which will educate students in career paths critical for Augusta's future in the areas of health sciences, energy technology and horticulture. They are sponsoring development of a new magnet high school on their campus with an emphasis on technology. Strategically located on Dean's Bridge Road near I-520, it can be a fulcrum for the revitalization of that distressed corridor.

Augusta's Regional Airport at Bush Field has just completed a major expansion of its terminal facilities. Carriers include Delta, US Airways, American and Continental Airline affiliates.

New program at Augusta Technical College supports the expansion of Plant Vogtle

Its designation as a Designated Air Services Development Zone facilitates efforts of the Augusta Aviation Commission to make the Augusta Regional Airport a focus for economic development for the region.

Potential Champion Groups

Ultimately it is the local development and broker community, often in partnership with the Housing Authority, area churches, institutions and property owners who will implement projects that can make a difference here.

The following illustrative projects show how policies that programmatically focus and cluster future development to key strategic areas might be implemented. These projects are prototypical in that the core recommendations can be applied to other properties across Suburban Augusta, thus helping fortify and rebuild long neglected parts of the city.
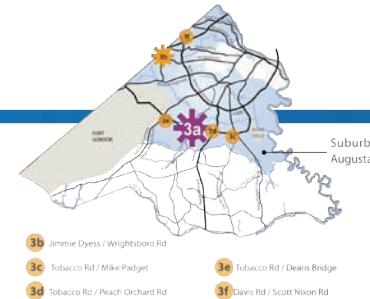
Project Type 3
Town Centers

Within Suburban Augusta, there are a number of locations where traffic volumes are high and with a strong population base settled nearby. In these areas, one can imagine a small Town Center forming, typically at an important crossroads. This center may be the result of a repositioning of an existing commercial area or at some locations, on yet-to-be-developed land. A critical factor in each of these is that the commercial component be matched with adjacent, large-scale residential development to support it.

#3a: Windsor Spring Town Center

Illustrative Program

The revitalization and redevelopment program for this intersection project is comprised of several components, each likely to have its own set of champions:

- The existing strip commercial shopping centers on the southside of Tobacco Road are reconfigured into Town Center styled shopping destinations, complete with a main street and a town green, 20,000sf of new infill retail is proposed. The immediate surrounding area is developed into walkable residential neighborhoods consisting of 320 small lot, single-family home and 80 garden apartments.

- A "Traditional Neighborhood Development" at the northwest quadrant is proposed for this undeveloped tract, with an open village green, fronted by a small 6,000sf commercial edge, with 130 town houses and small lot, single-family residences surrounding the green. Nearby, within walking distance of the town center, a 93 unit subdivision is shown in the valley heading toward Butler Creek.

- In the northeast quadrant, a civic use (church), a 190 unit single family residential community, an 80 unit senior living apartment complex and associated neighborhood parks and ball field next to Tobacco Road Elementary School.

Conservation Subdivision

New Town Green, and Landscaped Public Space

Conservation Area around Historic Spring

New Playing Field

Supportive Multi-Family Housing

Shopping Center

Legend:
- Natural Areas
- Institution
- Open Space
- Beauty Spot
- Single Family Home
- Apartment
- Retail

Figure 2-15. Windsor Spring Illustrative Site Plan

The Big Idea

Create a highly identifiable 'place to be and to be seen' at the intersection of Tobacco Road and Windsor Spring. The existing shopping centers located on the south side of Tobacco Road are repositioned as well-shaded, walkable venues, where shoppers can linger and enjoy the comings and goings of their neighbors. To build enough critical mass to stabilize retail uses, a residential area would supply more housing on the vacant land to the north, west and east of the town center.
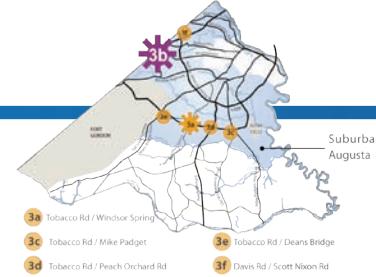

Figure 2-16. New Town Green, as seen from Windsor Spring Road.

Project Type 3

A second Town Center project near the county line.

#3b: Belair Town Center

Healthcare and Office Commercial Uses

Townhomes and Small Lot, Single-Family

Columbia County

Garden City Gateway

Augusta Riding Center

New Park

Legend:
- Commercial Office / Health Care
- Village Center
- Single Family
- Open Space
- Gateway Landscaping
- Streetscaping

Figure 2-17: Belair Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

Given its proximity to I-20, Fort Gordon and Columbia County this is a highly desirable development site. The development program for this area is comprised of two components:

- On the undeveloped north side of Wrightsboro Road, a Town Center development is proposed. The program includes 80,000sf of new retail, 100,000sf of office space, 220 units of town house and small lot, single-family development.

- Redevelopment and repositioning assistance for the area lying between Wrightsboro Road and the Jimmie Dyess Parkway is proposed.

Public improvements in the area include the creation of a Garden City Gateway for Belair with a well landscaped, urban boulevard on both the Jimmie Dyess Parkway and Wrightsboro Road the length of the town center. Within the town center, the new main street, which connects existing streets and neighborhoods to this destination, as well as the new town green and neighborhood park are assumed to be public sector responsibilities.

Figure 2-18. New residential development, as viewed rom extension of Maddox Road
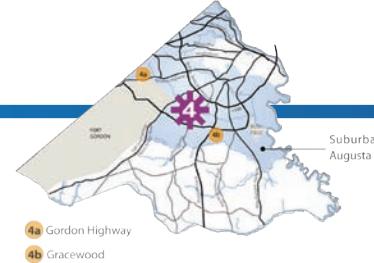
Create an attractive and vibrant urban, mixed-use center at the west end of Augusta, serving people coming into the City from I-20 east bound and along the Jimmie Dyess Parkway from Columbia County. A well-designed, "Traditional Neighborhood Development" and "Walkable Subdivision" area provides not only commercial and institutional services, but also, with its Town Center layout, it offers households a desirable alternative environment in which to live.

Couple this with a Garden City "Gateway" corridor, with strategically located "Landscape Highlight Areas" in the public way, will differentiate this area from the commercial sprawl development found just across the county line. Abundant landscaping and clear signage will set the image of Augusta as the "Garden City."

Project Type 4

Conservation-Lifestyle Subdivision

The conservation subdivisions built on creekways offer an attractive, lifestyle alternative to traditional subdivision development, while reserving significant amounts of land as open space.

4a Gordon Highway
4b Gracewood

Suburban Augusta

#4a: Butler Creek Conservation Subdivision

Figure 2-19. Butler Creek Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

This large tract lies along Butler Creek, the city's priority corridor for developing an east-west running linear park. The program has two major components:

- A large new residential community of 570 single-family homes developed within a park-like layout reminiscent of areas found in the historic Summerhill neighborhood, streets with medians, neighborhood parks and potentially a small convenience retail shop on Windsor Spring Road.

- A community garden along Butler Creek which lends atmosphere and character to the area, while providing an opportunity to grow local produce and to teach local children agricultural basics.

In addition to the establishment of this segment of the Butler Creek Linear Park, an east-west public road, "Butler Creek Road", is proposed adjacent the park. Other public improvements in the area include the a number of parks and play areas within the community.

The Big Idea:

Capitalize on the on-going, joint effort of the City and the Central Savannah River Land Trust to create an active lifestyle community fronting the proposed multipurpose path and linear park along Butler Creek. Such a development would increase safety and security for this park, would protect environmentally sensitive areas, would better connect existing adjacent neighborhoods, provide agricultural learning venues, and provide easy access to the Windsor Spring Town Center and surrounding schools. A new "Butler Creek Road" would run the length of this waterway, providing a scenic connection across the middle of the city.

Figure 2-20. Looking south across Butler Creek, over the linear park and the community garden to a 500+ home subdivision

Project Type 5
Regional Mixed Use Center

Within south suburban Augusta, there are large sites available, which can become regional retail, employment or recreational regional destinations, which would serve a population, which is currently under-served in each of these sectors. This is where a major part of Augusta's growth is occurring. The challenge is 1) to direct this type of regional development in such a way that it can achieve a critical mass that is self sustaining and which will draw smaller chains and businesses to the area, and 2) that this development can become an attractive center with character and a sense of place.

#5a: Peach Orchard Regional Retail Center
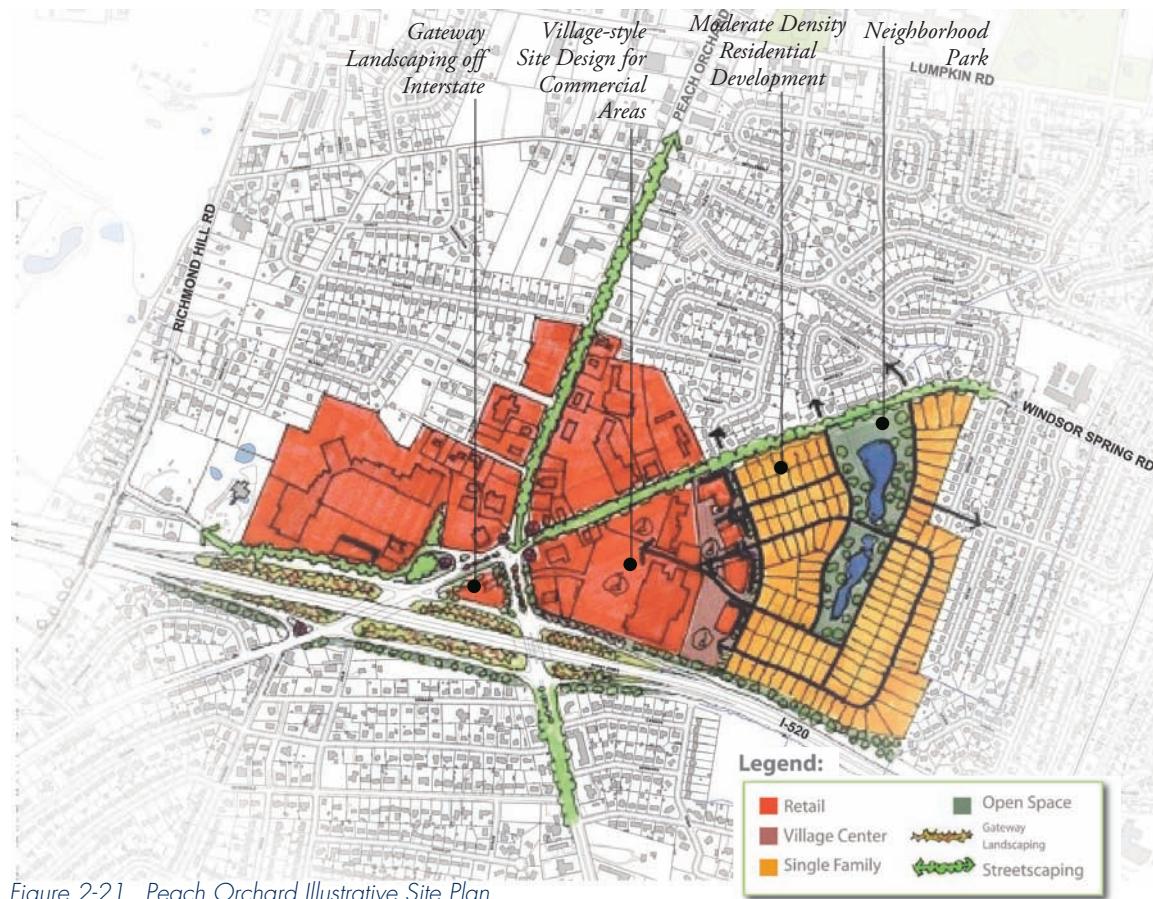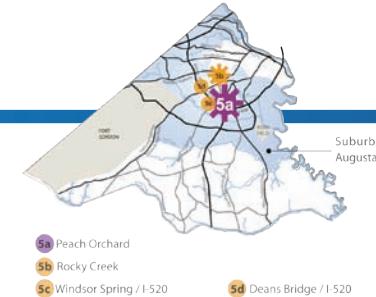
Figure 2-21. Peach Orchard Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

This interstate highway interchange is already the strongest regional "big box" commercial location in south Augusta. This illustrative development concept for the area has two components:

• Peach Orchard Road Regional Retail Center-Redevelopment and expansion of national chains along this road, At least one of the existing malls is redeveloped to attract a "big box" user. The program assumes 10,500,000sf of new anchor retail, 1,500,000sf of renovated retail and 700,000sf of other new retail.

• Assuming the existing orchard and nursery operations can be relocated to a less strategic location, development of a 'Traditional Neighborhood Development' community integrated into the backside of the adjacent mall with a 40 unit small-lot residential development and 100 apartments would connect to existing neighborhoods.

Public improvements in the area include the creation of well landscaped, urban boulevards on both Peach Orchard and Windsor Spring Roads, the length of the regional retail center, the town green parks and ball fields mentioned above and connecting roadway segments to existing subdivisions.

The Big Idea:

This is the prime area in south suburban Augusta where market forces are telling retailers, brokers and developers to place their regional, i.e. "Big Box" operations. It is also on a major interchange and the gateway corridor from Savannah. Here, Augusta has the opportunity to concentrate regional commercial in a way that improves the chances for individual success and develop a model for other areas, existing and future, as to how to integrate auto-oriented activities with adjacent communities. Here, the intent is to serve those arriving by car as well as on foot or bike from these neighborhoods, all the while creating an attractive and vibrant entry into the city.
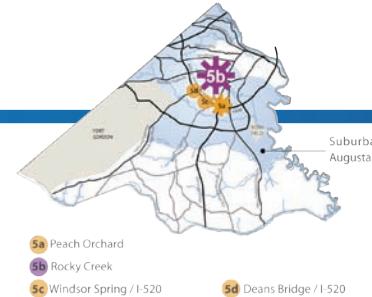

Figure 2-22. Peach Orchard Regional Shopping demonstrates the positive visual impact of strong tree planting at the edge of the roadway and the store's parking lot.

Project Type 5

A second Regional Mixed-Use project near Regency Mall.

5a Peach Orchard
5b Rocky Creek
5c Windsor Spring / I-520   5d Deans Bridge / I-520

## #5b: Rocky Creek Mixed Use Park
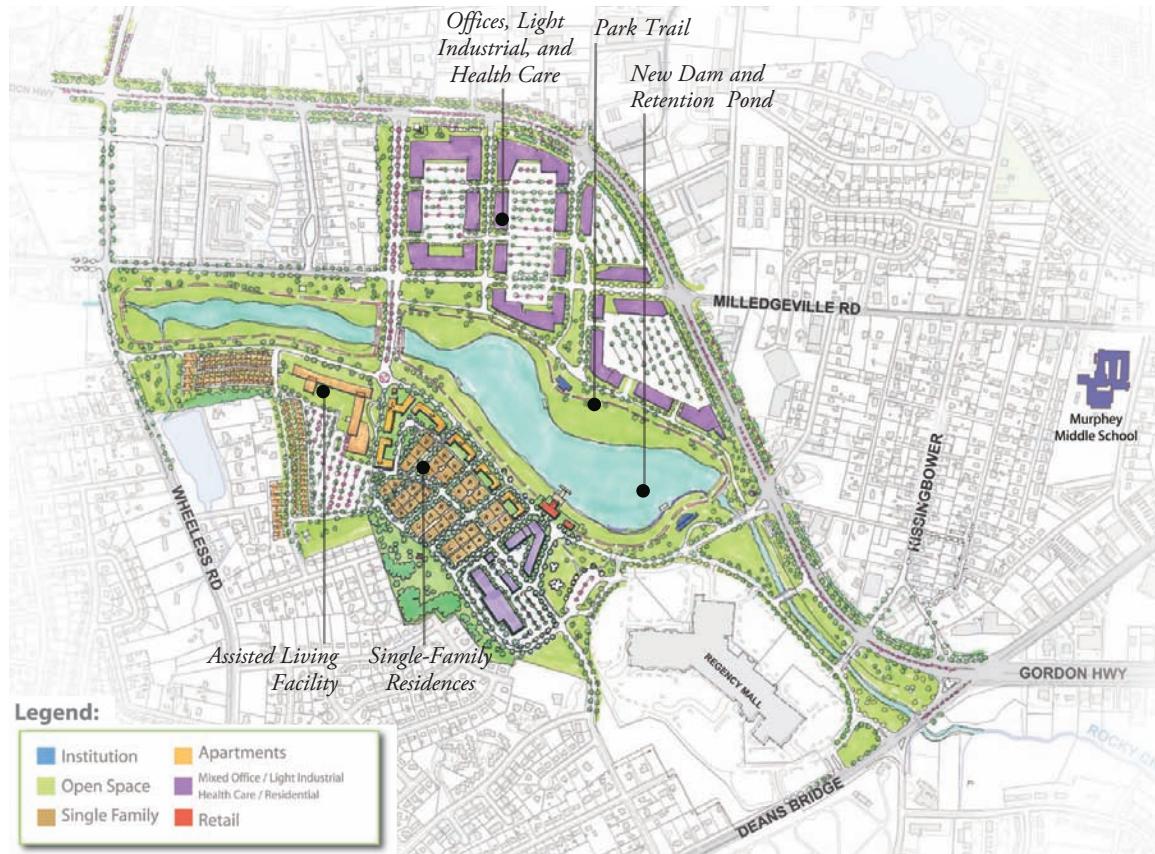
Figure 2-23. Rocky Creek Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

This is the place, along Rocky Creek, between Deans Bridge Road and Wheeless Road, where Augusta can best realize her image as the Garden City. The illustrative program has three key components, built around a lake and park:

- A business park with a wide range of office, commercial and light industrial uses totaling over 1,000,000sf.

- A senior living complex of 290 independent and assisted living units in a combination of small lot single family houses and apartments, with full support services, including a cafeteria.

- A market rate residential development of 80 apartments, town houses, and small lot single family houses.

Public improvements in the area are extensive, and include the creation of the flood retention lake and surrounding park, transformation of the Gordon Highway segment from Highland Avenue to Deans Bridge Road into a heavily landscaped urban boulevard. Entry and major internal roads with the development, particularly those connecting to major arterials and the adjacent neighborhoods.

The Big Idea:

Leverage the City's and the Corps of Engineer's plan for the Rocky Creek flood control dam and retention area into a major public recreational amenity which becomes the center piece for development of a region scaled, mixed use complex, Rocky Creek Park would be focused on business and jobs, surrounding a regional recreation park, interwoven with residential uses and connecting to existing neighborhoods. This long-term project would be developed incrementally over the next two decades.

Figure 2-24. Looking south, over the new lake and regional park to a new, urban neighborhood

Project Type 6

Repositioned Strips of Retail

Older car-oriented, strip commercial centers are anemic or failing along arterial corridors throughout Augusta. This is a national retail trend that is causing many owners and investors to look to new strategies for reinvigorating these places. Often these centers are adjacent neighborhoods, which have suffered through decades of decline, due in part to orientation of these centers, which are often stacked next to one another and turn their back on the neighborhoods. Traffic volumes are expected to continue to decline.

#6a: Southgate Urban Village
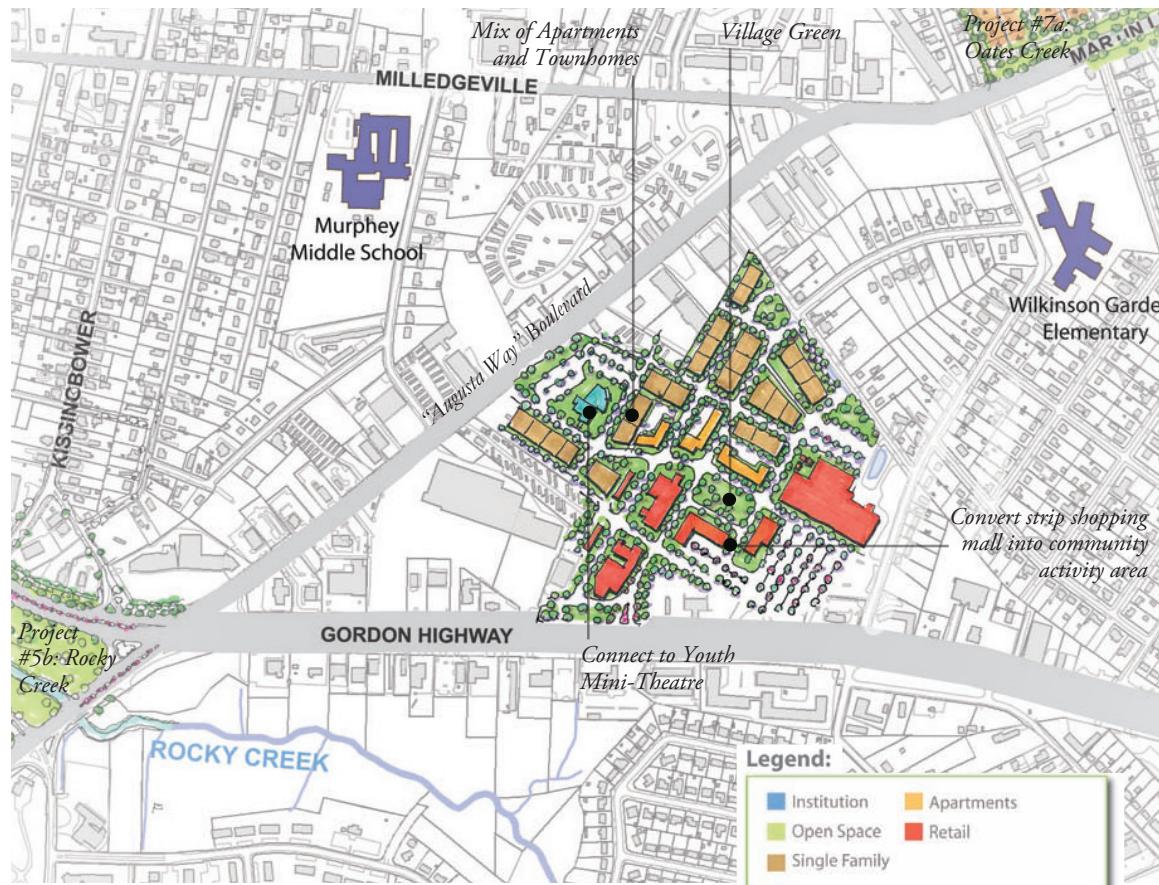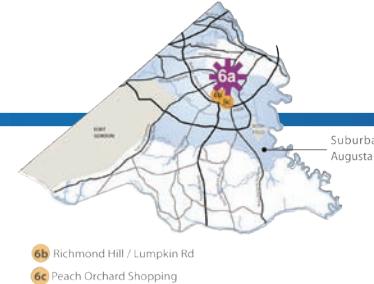
Figure 2-25. Southgate Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

Southgate Shopping Mall, one of the city's first large roadway oriented shopping centers is in steady decline. Southgate Urban Village illustrates a proven model for transforming this center into a local, neighborhood-oriented urban village, which will give this part of Augusta a whole new sense of self. The illustrative program has two major components:

- The repositioned Southgate Mall to include demolition of over 50% of the current facility, renovation of the remaining 150,000sf and construction of 40,000sf of new retail space around the green.

- To the north of the new retail center, a mixed-income residential neighborhood of up to 330 apartments, town houses, and small lot, single-family houses.

Public improvements in the area include construction of two new streets, one a new main street from Deans Bridge through the Southgate to Tubman Home Road, the other from the Gordon Highway to Cherry Road. In addition, the "Augusta Way" boulevard passes directly by this site and a new public green within the Southgate parcel is proposed. Public funds will likely be needed make required site adjustments to the Augusta Mini-Theater property and to aid in their desired expansion.

The Big Idea:

Convert the aging, roadway-oriented Southgate commercial shopping center into a well-landscaped, pedestrian-friendly Village, with its own distinct identity and personality. The existing neighborhood would be stabilized and expanded into the current strip retail site, with neighborhood-oriented businesses. Everything would connect to the adjacent neighborhood, elementary school, mini-theater and local YMCA sports facilities along "Augusta Way", the proposed multi-modal corridor.

Figure 2-26. Looking north at the new Southgate community commercial center, with the expansion of the Augusta Mini-Youth Theatre in the forefront
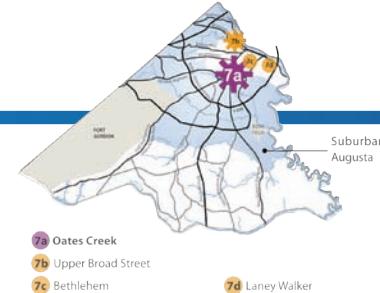
Project Type 7
Neighborhood Revitalization

Certain areas of the city's present urban edge are distressed to a degree that both broad public and private actions are required to make them whole again. Two of these, the Oates Creek area along the proposed "Augusta Way" corridor and Upper Broad Street are both distressed neighborhoods with major entry corridors running through them and presently offer a negative impression of the city as a whole.

#7a: Oates Creek Neighborhood Revitalization

Figure 2-27. Oates Creek Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

The Oates Creek area lies on either side of the proposed "Augusta Way" and centered on its intersection with Olive Road. The redevelopment would be in concert with proposed GaDOT roadway improvements along this corridor, and in conjunction with goals and objectives of several local churches, as well as the Augusta Housing Authority, who own property in the area. The illustrative program has three major components:

- Development of the corridor edge with a string of urban density residential with a small convenience retail area at the corner of Olive and Martin Luther King Boulevard.

- Redevelopment of under-utilized land and 100 selected rehabilitation homes within the neighborhood, plus 80 units for seniors, and 80 at market rate.

- Phase Two would include 370 units each, of rental and owner-occupied housing.

Public improvements in the area include construction of "Augusta Way", and streetscape up grades along Olive Road, Koger and White Roads, several new neighborhood parks, and landscape improvements at the historic sites of the Tubman Home and the Shiloh Comprehensive Community Center.

The Big Idea:

The area along Martin Luther King Boulevard, between the intersections of Olive Road and Fifteenth Street, is one of the most prominent, most central, most heavily traveled … and yet most deteriorated… parts of Augusta. Using the proposed Georgia DOT road-widening project as catalyst, work with the private sector and local churches, community institutions, the Board of Education and the Augusta Housing Authority, who are all major land owners in the area, to rebuild a denser, more urban and more family friendly community at this inner-ring neighborhood location.

Figure 2-28. The view down "Augusta Way", with a multi-purpose pathway allowing bike, pedestrian, and low-speed electric vehicle passage alongside new residential buildings

In Urban Augusta

This is the traditional, historic city core, much of which was examined in the 2009 Westobou Vision Urban Area Master Plan. Three new Prototypical Project areas directly connect with that Plan, which is incorporated into this Agenda with "Figure 2-33. Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda Priority Corridor District (pink) as it connects with the Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan (grey)" on page 2-91.

Issues for the Next Two Decades

The Urban Area includes the downtown area and a number of near-in neighborhoods, which made up the historic core of Augusta. These include Old Town, Laney Walker, Bethlehem, Harrisburg. Summerville and the area east of East boundary between Sandbar Ferry and Laney Walker to I-520 is also in this area. The entire Urban Area is fighting its way back from an exodus of families, businesses and money that has occurred over the past forty years.

The issues are many and include residential neighborhood revitalization; reconnecting neighborhoods to the downtown core; insuring that the core remains the civic and cultural center of the region; encouraging growth in the health sciences toward the downtown in a way that strengthens the urban fabric; expanding and building an interconnected open space system, with newly renovated parks; densifying the core by getting more people living downtown; preserving key buildings and rebuilding the urban fabric; replacing lost trees and providing well shaded sidewalk connections, thus increasing 'walkability'; maximizing connections to the river and the canal system; taming the rail lines, the downtown expressways and the overhead power lines that are major impediments to the downtown's renaissance.

Assets to Build Upon

The urban area has its physical assets of river, canals, lake, historic areas and buildings. Broad Street is one of the most intact streets in the southeast; wide, tree lined and flanked by significant architecture along its length. Oglethorpe's strong urban grid gives even is most distressed parts a strong framework on which to rebuild.

It is the cultural heart of the region, with the Augusta Symphony Orchestra and the Morris Museum leading the way. It is a sports destination for baseball, hockey, basketball and the riding competitions. It is the center of education, with two highly ranked magnet high schools, the Georgia Health Sciences University and Paine College sited within the proposed Priority Development District.

It has business, institutional and civic leaders and ordinary citizens who care for it and work to make it better. The downtown is in a slow renaissance. Local developers have been active in building renovation. A new hotel is under design and a number of major public buildings have been constructed recently.
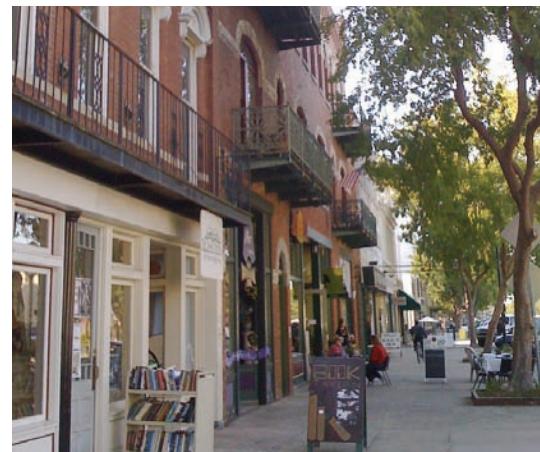
Key Projects and Initiatives

Augusta Tomorrow, Inc is pouring energy into implementing several of the projects identified in the 2009 Westobou Plan. This work is incorporated into this Agenda's initiative. Neighborhood development efforts in Laney Walker, Bethlehem, and Harrisburg are reinforced by this Agenda and can serve as example for work to come. The reorganization of the Medical College of Georgia can provide an opportunity to develop a nationally recognized health sciences center on under-utilized land in the heart of the urban area. The Augusta Housing Authority's Underwood Homes project is another example on which to build.

Augusta State is in the process of developing a new master plan for the university, which will expand the campus west of Daniel Field along Wrightsboro Road. This plan should allow the university to be both catalyst and stable partner to other key interests in the area, including the retail centers of the Augusta Mall and Daniel Village and the intersection of Wrightsboro and Jackson Roads.

Paine College, a private, liberal arts college lies at the mid-point of this Agenda Priority Development District. It has recently completed a master plan effort that will guide its development and growth over the next decade.

With a new name and a new president, the **MCG | Georgia Health Sciences University** (GHSU) has expanded at a rapid pace with a nearly completed St. Sebastian Way opening up large tracts of under developed land nearby, GHSU is set to move to a new level. The direction of their growth, and the extent to which they engage the community, can have a very positive impact on the implementation of this Agenda.

Augusta should do everything in its power to promote the economic vitality of Broad Street

Potential Champion Groups

The Georgia Health Sciences University, Augusta Tomorrow, Inc, the Augusta Canal Authority, the Kroc Foundation, patrons and leaders in the arts and sports can collaborate with the city and the private sector to make important things happen here.
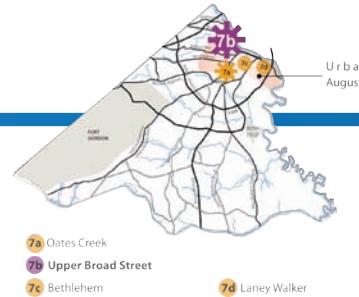

MCG | Health Sciences University is an important champion of the St. Sebastian Medical District

Project Type 7

A second Neighborhood Revitalization project near Lake Olmstead.

#7b: Upper Broad Street Revitalization

Mix of Apartments, Townhomes, and renovated Single-Family

Legend:

Retail	Institutional
Single Family	Open Space
Apartments	Gateway Corridor

High-rise, Market-rate, Residential Condominium

Convenience Shopping at Intersections

Historic Sibley Mill

"Harrisburg Village" from Westobou Urban Area Plan

Figure 2-29. Upper Broad Street Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

The distressed Upper Broad Street corridor runs through Harrisburg, an historic mill village of with two of the city's most magnificent 19th century mills, remnants of the village center, the beautiful First Level Canal and a fabric of modest worker housing. It connects downtown with the more affluent neighborhoods of West Augusta, Lake Olmstead and the world famous Augusta National Golf Club. The revitalization program calls for:

- Rezoning the corridor to encourages redevelopment of two historically commercial nodes at key intersections along Broad, 20,000sf at Crawford and 8000sf at Milledge.

- Construction of 60 new residential infill units, replacing inappropriate commercial uses and badly deteriorated stock, and 80 units for seniors, with intensive rehabilitation between the two, and application of the city's neighborhood rehabilitation polices in the surrounding blocks.

- Development of grossly underutilized land at the southern end of Lake Olmstead into a 160 unit apartment high-rise overlooking the lake land.

Public improvements in the area include roadway improvements to Broad Street, including utility burial, converting this roadway into a well landscaped "Garden City Boulevard" The plan proposes new boathouse, fishing pier and recreational trail around the lake, and redesign of the roadway at Broad Street, eliminating excess roadway and developing a lakeside promenade.

The Big Idea:

Recognize Lake Olmstead's potential as a major catalyst for the redevelopment of Upper Broad Street. At its southern end, develop a high-end residential tower focused on Lake Olmstead views and the Augusta Canal beyond. This development will serve as catalyst for a revitalization program for Harrisburg's Upper Broad Street, including conversion of Broad Street into a landscaped, largely residential boulevard, establishment of aggressive housing infill, and housing rehabilitation programs in this area and future new housing along the lake as sites become available.
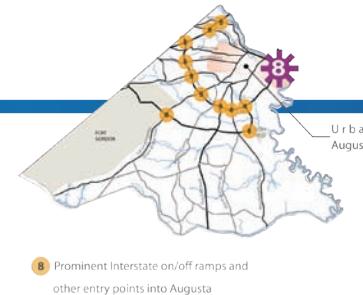

*Figure 2-30. Thre rejuvinated south end of Lake Olmstead.*

Project Type 8
Identity Gateway

There are nearly a dozen interchanges serving Augusta, from either I-20 or I-520. As entry points, these represent important opportunities for the city to make a positive first impression on those arriving into the city. Today, most are unattractive, with confusing signage and minimal landscape.

8 Prominent Interstate on/off ramps and other entry points into Augusta

#8a: Sandbar Ferry Gateway
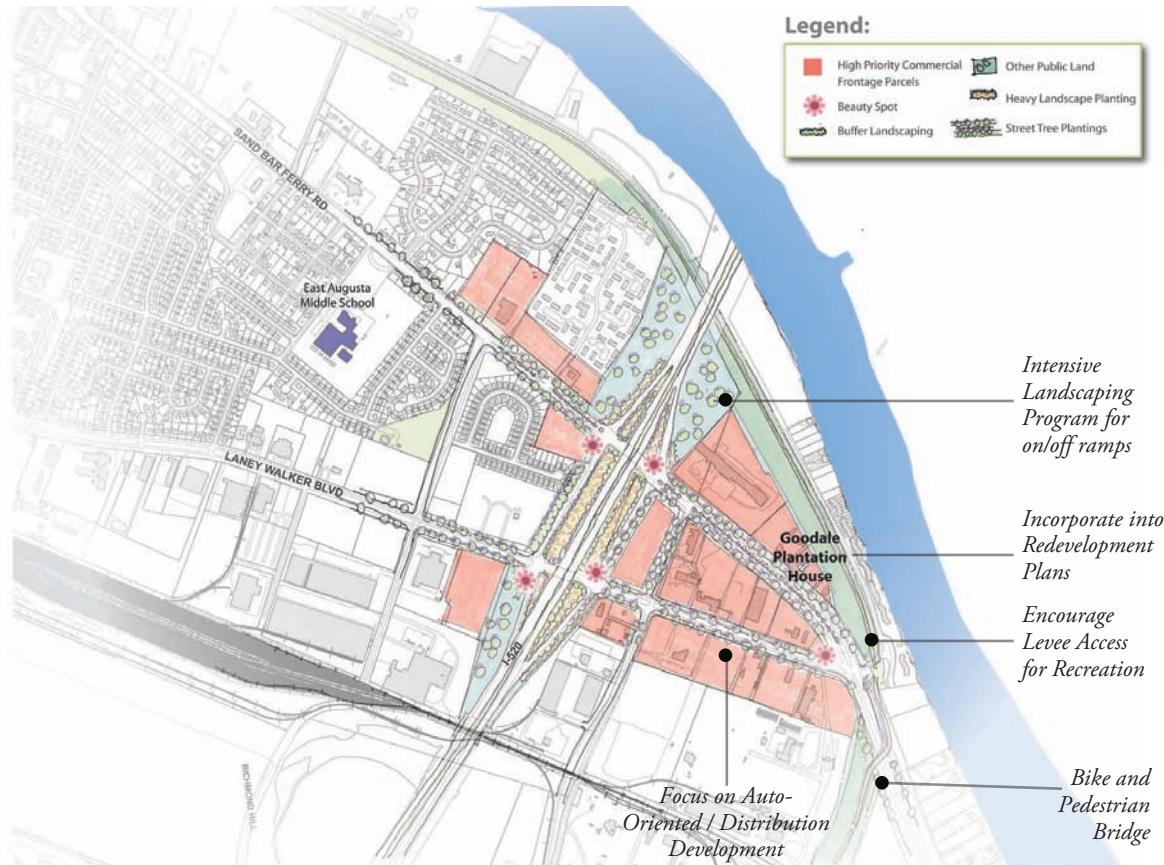
Figure 2-31. Sandbar Ferry Illustrative Site Plan

Illustrative Program

This is an interstate highway interchange. The illustrative development program focuses on:

• Auto service and driver convenience uses predominate, with gas stations, fast food establishments and a potentially a small hotel totaling 150,000sf are illustrated in this example.

• Any development adjacent the historic Goodale Plantation House should incorporate that property into its program

The major improvements in these areas are in the public environment. The shoulders of the on and off ramps are well landscaped. "Garden City Highlight Areas" are placed at the bottom of off ramps as a backdrop for clear directional signage into downtown or other important nearby destinations, in this case, the industrial area off Lovers Lane and the medical area served by Laney Walker Boulevard. Sandbar Ferry Road should become a "Garden City Boulevard" and secondary streets should have basic sidewalk and street tree plantings.

The Big Idea:

Create an attractive and welcoming Gateway at this east end of Augusta. Place signage and abundant planting in the public spaces, both along roadways and at designated "Garden City Highlight Areas" to set the image of Augusta as "the Garden City" for visitors coming both via the Interstate and along SandBar Ferry Road. Develop and enforce well considered planting and landscaping requirements for auto-oriented service businesses, as well as for support activities such as distribution and layover facilities. Restore and reuse the historic Goodale Plantation House as a welcome center or as part of a lodging/business or events complex.
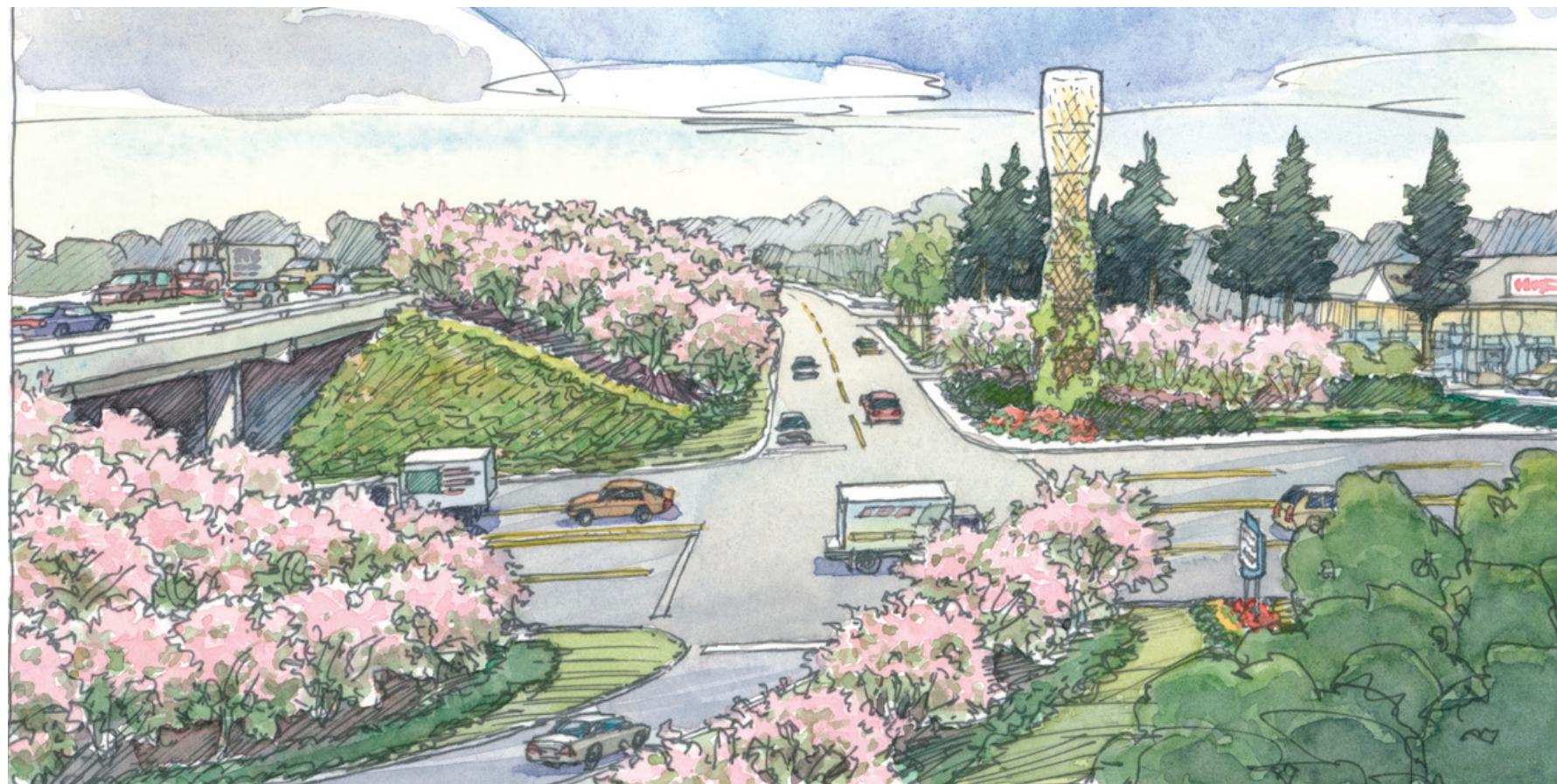

Figure 2-32. A new, grand entrance into Augusta from I-520, one of several unique gateways to the City.

Integrating the 2009 Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan with this Agenda

The Big Idea:

While pushing the 2009 Westobou Urban Area Plan forward by including its recommendations into the Augusta Sustainable Design Agenda, focus first on those recommendations that which fall into the proposed Priority Development District. These include a urban area transportation planning review, an updated open space plan and five Market Creation Projects.

Aerial View of Downtown Augusta

Illustrative Development Program

The Westobou Urban Area Plan proposed a series of interconnected "Market Creation Projects" which, like the Prototype Projects identified herein, typically require a public-private partnership and often, some sort of public financing assistance. These projects are scattered throughout the downtown and include Westobou Crossing; Westobou Arts Center; Marbury Village; St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park; Augusta Canal Neighborhood; Harrisburg Canal Village; Dyess Canal Village; Sandbar Ferry Riverside.

The Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan for the urban area proposed a series of initiatives to be pursued at the federal, state, regional and local levels. It developed a framework for an integrated open space plan of links and nodes. It also recommended a comprehensive transportation planning review to consider the transportation implications of its recommended projects. It adopted the recommendations of the various neighborhood redevelopment initiatives.

Economic Development

Downtown Augusta is the core of the six county region and its health and vitality are critical to this region. It is the civic and cultural center of the region and is positioned to strengthen that role due to its riverfront, its historic fabric and the ongoing vitality of its arts and the sporting events for which it is well known.

These five market creation projects include a cultural arts component (the Westobou Arts Center), a technology/education element (St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park) and three residential neighborhood development activities (Marbury Village, Augusta Canal Park, and Harrisburg Canal Village). The five developments are focused in the area from the River to Walton Street and from 7th Street to the east to Eve Street on the west side.

Westobou Arts Center

This project is concentrated in the area bounded by 7th Street, Broad Street, 9th Street and the River, will facilitate a total development of $100 million including $21 million in improvements to and operating support for existing cultural facilities; $22 million in new public open spaces; and $56 million in investment in new cultural facilities. This is a logical home for a center commemorating the life, times and music of James Brown, the charismatic King of Soul.

St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park

The city, indeed the county and the region, joined with the health sciences community, could realize a cutting edge, nationally significant, mixed-use health sciences park on the scale of University of California San Francisco's Mission Bay in this area of under-utilized land between the present medical area and the downtown core.

This project will involve $500 million of private development including 1.3 million square feet of research, technical manufacturing, and office space. This investment in a new high-tech campus along the new St. Sebastian Way will reinforce the connection of the medical district with the downtown.

Marbury Village

Marbury Village, Augusta Canal Park, and Harrisburg Canal Park will greatly expand market rate housing activity at this key terminus of the Priority Development District. With multiple phases and locations, these developments will over time to add 900 to 1,200 units of housing in the Broad Street and Greene Street corridors from 10th to Crawford Streets. This housing, including both sales and rental units, will include a variety of unit sizes and price points.

Harrisburg Canal Village

The First Level Canal, as it runs from Chaffee Park eastward to the historic and iconic Butt Bridge, offers nearly a mile of high quality waterfront. An up-scale, European-styled canal village with the canal-bordered, tree-lined path, and near continuous row housing would be part of the greenway network connecting to downtown. At Broad Street, the village would flow into the historic mill scene with a new neighborhood center of mixed historic and site-appropriate, new construction.

Augusta Canal Village

Finally, the creation of a large central park between downtown and the emerging Third Level Canal redevelopment area and the medical area would act as both a connector and a catalyst to surrounding development.

This Agenda's **Priority Development District** runs from the Riverwalk to Rocky Creek and utilizes the Dean's Bridge Road, Milledgeville Road and 15th Street linkage to connect the Gordon Highway and Dean's Bridge development node (Priority Projects #5b, #6a, and #7a) to the downtown core of business, education, health care, and cultural activity and employment. At the downtown terminus of this corridor, implementation of five specific market creation projects of the Westobou Urban Area Plan become key strategies to facilitating the full functioning of this corridor.

As seen in "Figure 2-33. Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda Priority Corridor District (pink) as it connects with the Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan (grey)" on page 2-91 part of the Urban Area Plan has been incorporated into this Agenda Priority Development District. This area is also crossed by three of the six "Garden City Corridors", three Prototypical Projects, and five of the Westobou Vision's Market Creation Projects.

Figure 2-33. Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda Priority Corridor District (pink) as it connects with the Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan (grey)

"Garden City" Corridors

- ▬ ASDA Riverwatch Parkway
- ▬ ASDA Westobou Trace
- ▬ ASDA Augusta Way

Legend:
- Undeveloped Land
- Existing Parks
- Proposed Open Space
- Interstate Area
- Bike Paths
- Major Greenway
- Small/Pocket Park
- Large/Regional Park
- Public Space

RIVERVIEW PARK

North Augusta Town Center

WATER WORKS PARK

Hammond's Ferry Town Center

LAKE OLMSTEAD PARK

SCHULTZ'S BLUFF PARK

ECOLOGY PARK

Riverside Ball Park

HAMBURG POND

Marbury Village

Westobou Crossing Plaza

BUTT BRIDGE PARK

CANALSIDE PARK

Westobou Arts Center

5th Street Bridge

BROAD STREET

AUGUSTA CANAL PARK

MUNICIPAL BUILDING GROUNDS

SAVANNAH VIEW PARK

DYESS PARK

Third Level Canal Terminus

SAND BAR FERRY PARK

Hornsby Square

Open Space Network

Figure 2-34. Westobou Urban Area Open Space Plan

Open Space and the Environment

Augusta's downtown lacks the single large central passive open space enjoyed by most cities of her size. While there are a number of parks, they tend to be isolated from each other. The new nodes proposed could have a dramatic impact on the attractiveness of the downtown and could be extended along radiating corridors, particularly along "Augusta Way" Boulevard into the southern reaches of the city. The proposed Sandbar Ferry Park is imagined as a regional riverfront park accessible by car and bike from all parts of the city.

*Downtown open space for relaxing during the work day and festivals on the weekend*

National Register of Historic Districts

- Downtown
- Olde Town
- Summerville
- Bethlehem
- Canal
- Harrisburg
- Laney Walker
- Pinchgut
- Sandhills
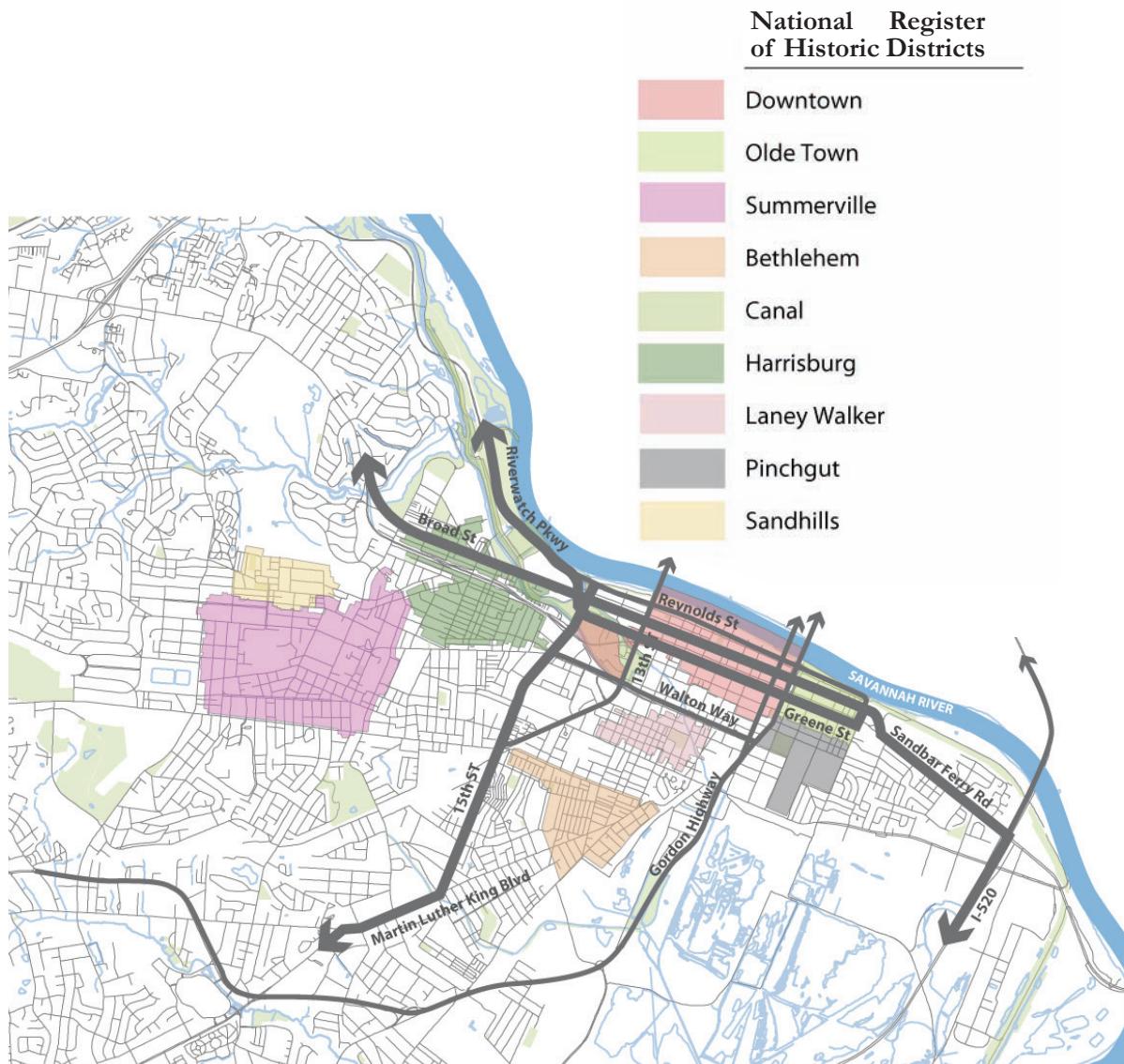
Figure 2-35. National Register Historic Districts in Urban Augusta around three, Strategic Action Corridors

Neighborhood and Community Development

Augusta's urban area consists, even today, largely of residential neighborhoods. Old Town, Laney Walker, Bethlehem, Harrisburg, Summerville are a short distance from the downtown core. Their rehabilitation and revitalization is key to the city's future sustainability and success.

Both the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Augusta Housing Authority are embarked on innovative programs in the area that will make a difference. Many of these programs and initiatives need to be expanded into other parts of the city, particularly along this Agenda Priority Development District.

Well preserved Greene Street home, built in 1881

Legend:
- Gateway Corridor
- Service Route
- Bridge Improvements- Bicycle and Pedestrian
- Bridge Improvements- Over Rail
- Reduced Speed Zone
- Vehicle Movement Improvement
- Ferry Route
- Trolley Route
- Greeneway/Bicycle Path
- Recent and Proposed Major Projects
- ★ Proposed Central Transportation Center
- JC Calhoun Reconfiguration
- Major Initiative
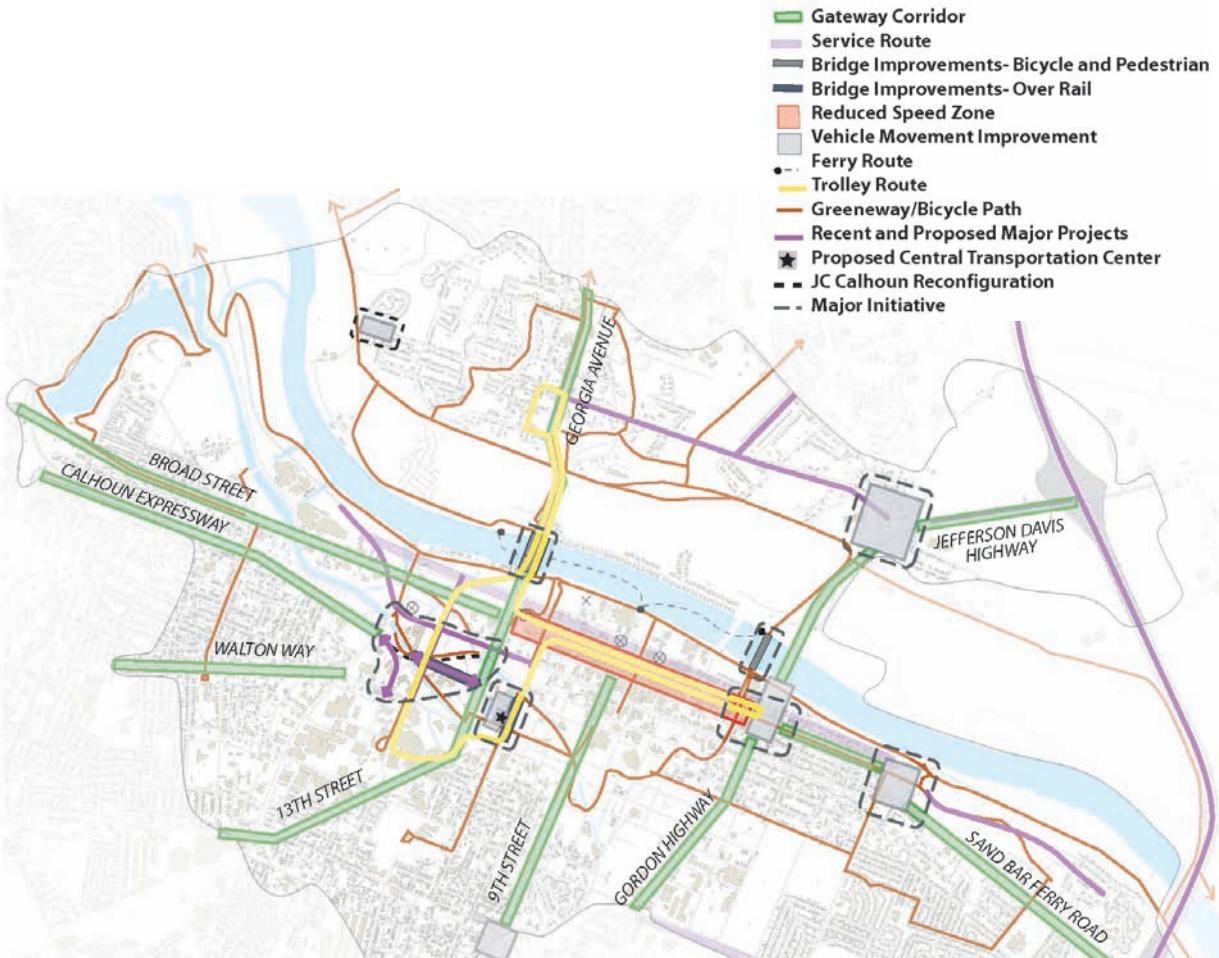
Figure 2-36. The Westobou Vision proposed a transportation planning review

Transportation Linkages

The Westobou Vision Urban Area master plan made a series of recommendations regarding several roadway corridors, including the Fifth Street Bridge, Broad (between 10th and 13th), Old Bailey and elevated portions of the John C. Calhoun Expressway. It also made recommendations concerning location of new fly-overs, a central transportation facility (strategically located between the downtown and the medical area), and freight and passenger rail service and how the larger regional freeway system might develop particularly in a north/south direction.

Many of these recommendations would work to the benefit of the south side of Augusta in particular.

Train as it cuts through downtown

Other Noteworthy Initiatives

In addition to the Priority Projects identified and described above, the Agenda has identified a number of local entities offering other high priority opportunities that can aid in reaching the goals of the Agenda. Each of these has implications for the future health of the city, both from an economic point of view and as potential image makers for Augusta. These especially noteworthy institutions with projects important to the city's future are described below.

Rail Service

The Georgia Rail Passenger Program by the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority, and two citizens groups- Georgians for Passenger Rail and the Georgian Association for Railroad Passengers have all been working on the reestablishment of passenger rail service within the state of Georgia. Augusta is the second largest city in the state and, along with Athens and Atlanta, forms a technology arc of universities, research, manufacturing and operational entities that could elevate the region to a new level. Rapid rail service would facilitate these endeavors.

Improved mass transit, commuter rail and inter-city passenger rail offer a long-term strategy for addressing Augusta's air quality issues, as it is on the edge for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's non-attainment status, impacting its ability to obtain federal funding.

Paine College

Mass transit can have a significant impact on air quality keeping Augusta an attractive place for business locations and ensuring its continued strength into the next millennium.

Similarly, freight service remains important to Augusta's manufacturing sector. However, efforts need to continue to mitigate the adverse traffic and noise impacts of their operations in the downtown.

Central Savannah River Land Trust

This organization is attempting to secure recreational and conservation use rights along the length of Butler Creek. As this effort is critical to the environmentally friendly development of several large parcels, their efforts should be supported to the fullest extent possible. This organization, along with several others could become proponents and implementers of a number of other cultural landscape preservation projects, as well as a major promoter of projects that reclaim Augusta's rural past, and reuse derelict land for activities such as urban organic farming and nurturing "grow local" operations.

Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization

The SRS Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO) is a 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization could play a major role in realizing the economic goals of this Agenda.

Their overall objective is to create an environment conducive to technology-based startups, business expansions and to attract new ventures to the region. The purpose is to help the region develop a diverse economic base by providing new emerging and existing companies with the financial opportunities and incentives to locate and expand within the region.

Low Speed, Electric Vehicles

Finally, Augusta is the world's center for golf cars and other fully electric, light-transportation vehicles. The City, Georgia Power, and the private sector could collaborate to develop a whole new system of urban public transit and short trip movement. The new Priority Development District could be their laboratory. Augusta should use this to its advantage in marketing itself as a sustainable, green-technology city, to the fullest extent possible.

3. THE POLICIES

A Sustainable Development Framework

This Agenda is predicated towards a growth management strategy that focuses on sustainable development as the key to the city's healthy future.

"**Growth management**" is a general name for the set of techniques used by local government to insure that as the area evolves the public services are there to meet the needs of its population. This is true whether the area is expanding, stable or in decline. The Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda proposes that Augusta adopt a well-established, best practices approach known as "Smart Growth" as a framework to protect and enhance its assets. This framework will build upon the federal government's new Partnership for Sustainable Communities; a joint Housing and Urban Development, Department of Transportation, and Environmental Protection Agency office.

The intent is to achieve a unique sense of community and place; expand the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices; equitably distribute the costs and benefits of development; preserve and enhance natural and cultural resources; and promote public health. It is an alternative to urban sprawl, traffic congestion, disconnected neighborhoods, and urban decay. The mechanisms for sustainable development are intentional changes in policies, programs, and public engagement in order to set a clear course for the future that will be supported by citizens, officials, and administrators.

Sustainable development values long-range, regional considerations over shorter term goals.
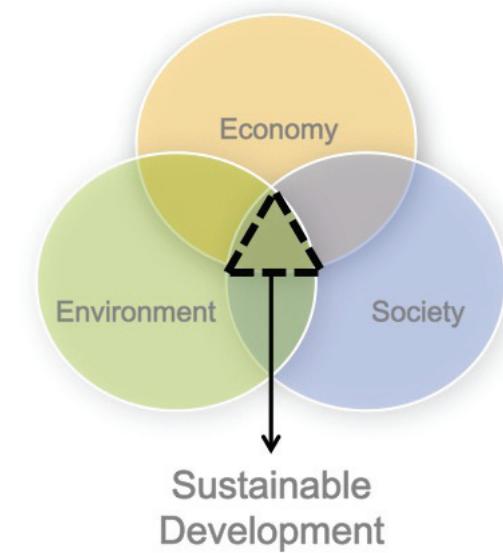
Figure 2-37. Venn Diagram of Sustainability

Sustainable development consists of a set of principles that guide community building in a way that enhances the economy, protects the environment, and improves a citizen's quality of life.

High Quality Streets:
Connecting People to Commerce

Historic Madison, GA remains a viable town center, serving its rural and suburban surroundings.

Liveable Communities:
Connecting People to People

Denser neighborhoods allow easier walking and more community interaction in Glenwood Park, Atlanta, GA.

Growing Smart:
Connecting People to the Environment

Greenway path at Hammonds Ferry, North Augusta, SC, linking the community to the Savannah River.

A Sustainable Augusta would...

• Protect and enhance its economic capital, ensuring growth, efficiency, and stability of its commerce.

• Protect and enhance its social capital, ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of all of its people.

• Protect and enhance its environmental capital, ensuring the resilience and biodiversity of its natural resources.

New Directions for Augusta

Why Here?

Regionally...

Sustainable development has regional implications. For example, because of its phenomenal growth in the past two decades, the southeast is consuming water at an increasing pace. While not historically an area with water scarcity issues, it is quickly becoming a point of major regional contention. Many experts agree that there is "not enough of the precious commodity to satisfy all competing demands and ensure an adequate supply for future development".[4] Sustainable growth techniques can assist the region in ensuring its natural, social, and economic resources remain for generations to come.

Locally...

Geographically, Augusta is a big, sprawling place. With city/county consolidation, its area is over 330 square miles. Ad hoc and unbridled growth is inefficient in terms of both time spent in travel and public tax expenditures. The consequences of sprawl include loss of resources and community character coupled with increased costs in terms of required public investments (road and sewer infrastructure maintenance) as well as providing core city services (schools, libraries, parks and playgrounds). Augusta's spread out nature makes it even more inefficient and costly than other cities with its population.

Why Now?

These are imperatives that must be addressed at the national level...

Federal initiatives are newly aligned in an exciting inter-agency coordination. Several federal organizations have joined forces in June of 2009 in a Partnership for Sustainable Communities to guide community development at the federal level.

• Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),

• Housing and Urban Development (HUD),

• Department of Transportation (DOT)

Each department has a program that, when combined with the others, assists cities with their sustainable community development initiatives. These initiatives complement the Sustainable Development Agenda and should position Augusta to be highly competitive for Federal assistance emerging out of these coordinated programs. These programs will be funded on an annual basis.

---

4   Seabrook, Charles. Atlanta and the South East. ITT Industries Guide to Regional Water Issues. http://www.itt.com/waterbook/atlanta.asp

The three departments have joined forces to award up to $75 million in funding for localized planning activities that ultimately lead to projects integrating transportation, housing, and economic development.

All grant applications will be judged upon six "**Livability Principles**"[5]:

- Provide more transportation choices.

- Promote equitable, affordable housing.

- Enhance economic competitiveness.

- Support existing communities.

- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.

- Value communities and neighborhoods.

More details on the principles of these initiatives and their available funding sources is located in Appendix 2.

_____

5   http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/index.html

These are imperatives that must be addressed at the local level...

At the local level, with its consolidated city-county form of government, Augusta is uniquely situated to very effectively manage its growth. Unlike non-consolidated governments, Augusta can plan and regulate the development of its urban, suburban, and rural areas. This provides the City with a strategic advantage in battling the nation-wide phenomenon of sprawl.

The Gordon Highway could be transformed into a vibrant jobs corridor.

What Can Be Accomplished?

A cardinal principle for sustainable development is to build on the framework of existing community resources. This Agenda recognizes the city's natural and man made green spaces as intertwined with the city. A wide network of open spaces is as important to the city as its network of traditional, built infrastructure. A "**Green Infrastructure**" network will protect environmentally sensitive areas while guiding growth into locations that are more suitable for development. In this way, key greenspaces, including parks, trails, open lands, and natural areas, can be linked together to support and enhance adjoining development. By documenting existing Green Infrastructure resources and enhancing them with bike and pedestrian linkages, new and existing developed areas can be qualitatively improved and enhanced.

This Agenda has been positioned to use Green Infrastructure to direct growth, rather than merely respond to it. This implies identifying areas where growth and development is preferred and providing other community services and amenities in a coordinated fashion. This Agenda recommendations include a strategy of targeted densification, not only in downtown, but throughout development nodes in Augusta's suburban areas as well.

City-wide, the Agenda calls for future development to focus in small hamlet developments in the south, to new town centers in the suburbs, to urban villages in both the traditional downtown area as well as at Rocky Creek, which is now the population center of the city. These development nodes will focus public and private energy on strategically located sites where the infrastructure, roads, and sewer systems are in place. A nodal approach to development will enable conservation of key resources and creation of walkable, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that can improve the quality of life for their residents.

For Augusta, the recommended Sustainable Development directions for the next two decades will focus on:

- Preserving scenic rural landscapes, and agricultural and timber harvesting farms.

- Delineating preferred growth areas for future development.

- Designating areas for clustered development around major intersections and creating hamlet, village, and neighborhood design and intensity guidelines.

- Integrating greenways into subdivision design to increase quality of life.

- Reinvigorating distressed suburban neighborhoods and commercial strips.

- Supporting downtown development.

More details on the what can be accomplished within the Three Parts of Augusta is located in Appendix 2.

Communities benefit from growth management frameworks by protecting natural resources, increasing economic competitiveness, and improving the quality of their neighborhoods. Communities that effectively use existing infrastructure and services in already built-up areas to support population growth can limit the costs of suburban sprawl. Typically, property values increase in existing built-up areas through redevelopment, achieving effective use of infrastructure and services already in place.

•Augusta's land development regulations that use

What Policy Changes Will Be Required?

With a coordinated set of policies and programs, Augusta can improve the quality of life for its residents and build upon its most positive elements to create a unique and supportive environment for growth. These policies and programs should be closely coordinated with community initiatives to encourage job growth in green technology, health sciences, education, tourism, and the rebuilding of the city.

In order for Augusta to use sustainable development to contribute to an improved quality of life, the city needs a set of influential, yet cost-effective tools. The city's tools to support the community's vision largely reside within its land development regulations.

The Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda has identified three critical policy areas where changes will be required to manage Augusta's future, built around and reinforced by an economic development strategy that builds on the city's core attributes. These areas are listed in the next few columns.

• **Land development regulations** that follow **Smart Growth** principles to protect and enhance natural resources while encouraging quality development and the redirection of current sprawl patterns into denser, nodal development ones. This Agenda recommends a series of easy to understand changes for Augusta's land development regulations that use **Green Infrastructure** as a point of departure to understand and make more effective use of Augusta's natural and man-made resources.

Historic hamlets like Hephzibah grew at a time when the ability to walk between commerce and residences was important

• Strategies to **revitalize Augusta's corridors** must be closely coordinated with land and development directions. As streets are the most important component of the public realm, this Agenda recommends using **Context Sensitive Solutions** as a way of rethinking roadway design and integration into their surrounding land uses.

Downtown's Broad Street is an urban arterial that was designed to respond positively to its context

- **Neighborhood revitalization policies** to stabilize neighborhoods include a series of owner occupied and renter occupied strategies for improving the quality of existing housing stock while supporting the **Choice Neighborhoods** initiative to connect neighborhoods to schools and other public services.

Each component is reviewed below and treated in detail in Appendix 2.

Quality housing stock

Use Augusta's existing and enhanced green infrastructure network to determine the "right" locations to build. For example, protect this orchard on Windsor Springs Rd from encroachment by its neighbors - a shopping center and several single family neighborhoods, as it provides the last scenic farmstead type views inside of I-520.

Adopting Land Development Regulations to Grow Smart

Our responsibility is to retain what we treasure.”

Frederick Steiner, The Living Landscape

This Agenda promotes sustainable development through a well-established, best practices approach known as Smart Growth. “**Smart Growth**” is an urban planning and transportation approach that concentrates growth in concentrated nodes, ranging in size from downtowns to town centers to hamlets, typically focused on key existing intersections.

Locating new houses close to public transportation and to shops, schools, and recreation, like an 19th century village or neighborhood, promotes sustainable development, creating walkable and bikable communities and opportunities for exercise while reducing driving time and air pollution.

As an integral component of a sustainable development approach, this Agenda uses the term “**Green Infrastructure**” to define Augusta’s natural resources. The word ‘infrastructure’ is important, as it draws a direct relationship between the area’s natural resources and its traditional, infrastructural resources. (roads, sewers, power lines).

Augusta’s Natural Resources

Figure 2-38. Topography and watershed flow in Augusta, two key Green Infrastructure components

URBAN
SUBURBON
RURAL
INDUSTRIAL-
FORT GORDON

Augusta's Corridor Network with Streams
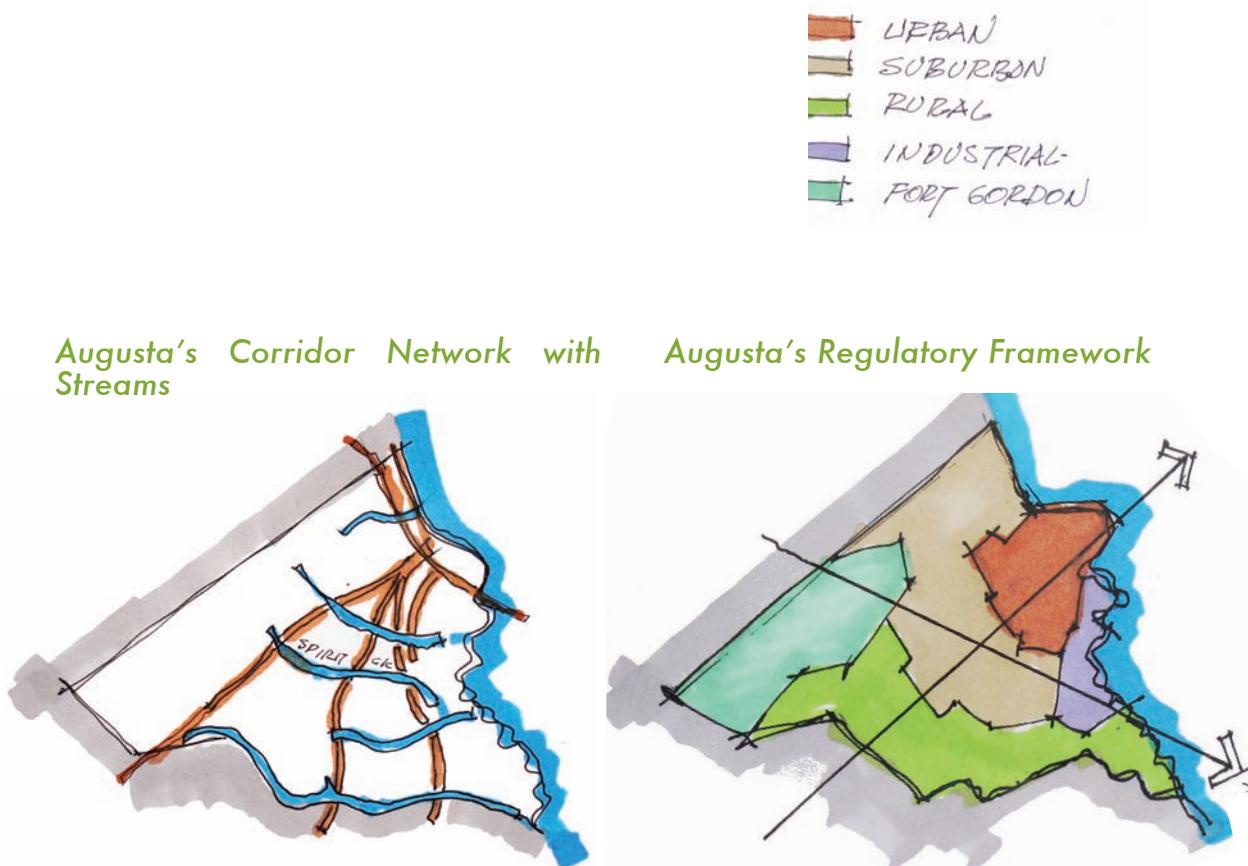
Figure 2-39. Roadway and Stream intersections create opportunities for increasing accessibility to greenspace, a key factor in growing smart.

Augusta's Regulatory Framework

Figure 2-40. This Agenda's proposed regulatory framework recognizes the inherent differences in the various parts of the city

This Agenda builds on the concept of Green Infrastructure as a strategic approach to integrate natural areas into development plans, for their preservation and enhancement of the developed area. It also builds on Smart Growth strategies that focus on maintaining ecosystem functions[6].

---

6   Green Infrastructure Toolkit. Atlanta Regional Commission, the Georgia Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land.

Pairing growth management with Green Infrastructure creates a united front between development and the environment to enhance and preserve Augusta's resources while increasing the opportunities for accessibility by Augusta citizens.

Understanding Augusta's Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure includes natural spaces such as parks, trails, groundwater recharge areas, endangered species habitats, creek buffers, wetlands, working agricultural and timber harvesting farms, wooded areas, floodplains, levees, canals, floodplains, agricultural soils, cultural and historic sites, cemeteries, and well-landscaped street right-of-ways. They create an interconnected network "supporting native species, air and water quality while contributing to the health and quality of life of its residents"[7].

Thinking long term, Augusta's Green Infrastructure needs to be understood as a strategic and essential framework for future land use planning. In most development proposals, it is fiscally responsible to research and plan for Green Infrastructure first and then do the costly engineering required to lay traditional infrastructure. As such, it should be a part of Augusta's Comprehensive Plan so that its concepts will be integrated into the City's land development ordinances.
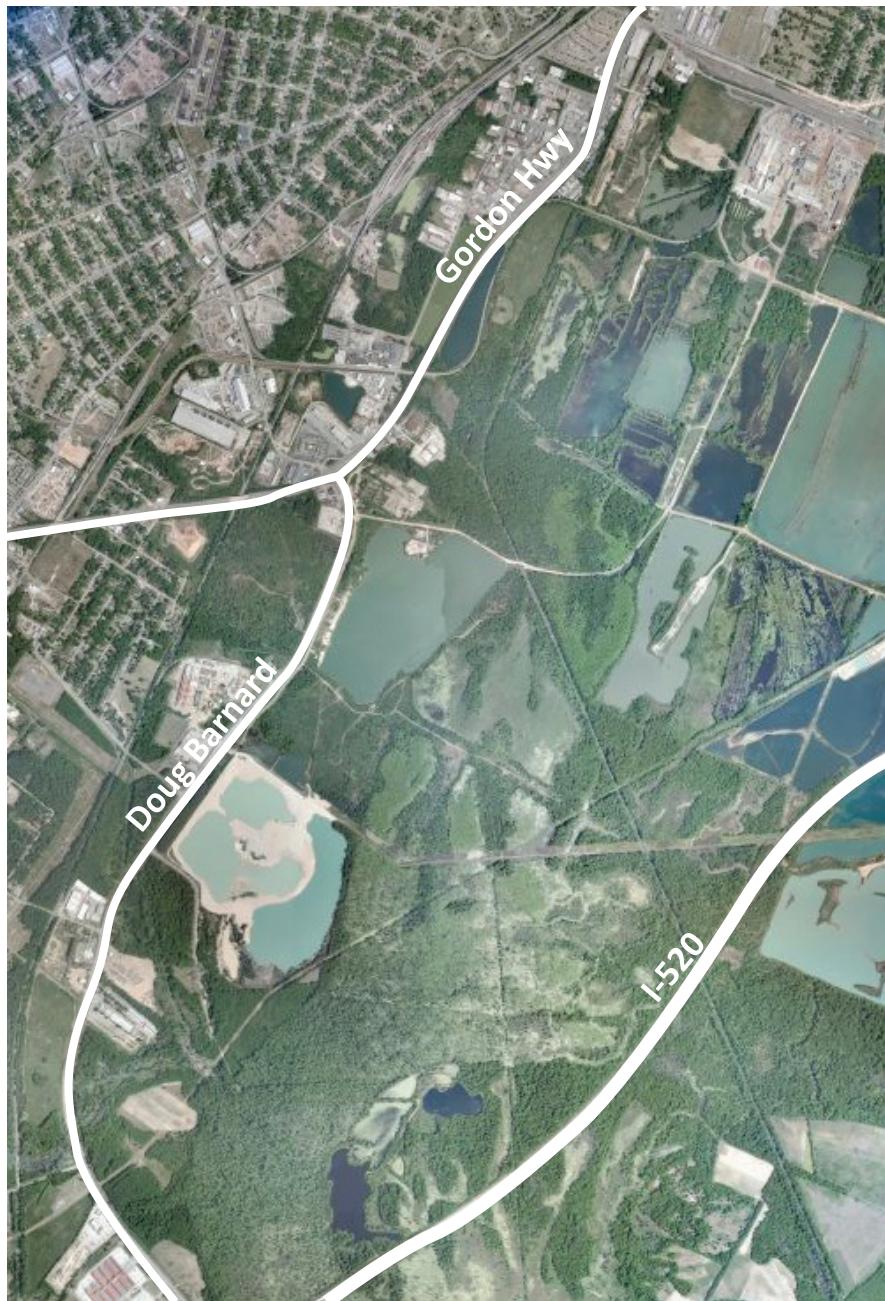
Reasons for including Green Infrastructure in a sustainable development plan include:

- Protection for environmentally sensitive areas while guiding growth to areas more suitable for development.

- Increased accessibility for recreational opportunities near population centers.

- Connecting destinations for both local residents (such as libraries and elementary schools) and tourists (historic and cultural attractions) by alternative transportation options in the form of trails, bikes, and low-speed vehicle paths.

- Defining rural areas as unique and separate from urban and suburban ones and therefore preserving community identity.

Although the barriers to preservation can seem large, the power behind any comprehensive Greenspace Program that incorporates Green Infrastructure into the land development approval process, will be derived from a strong visioning document, backed up with a strong set of land development regulations, and the insight to strategically leverage opportunity as it presents itself. This all happens through the coordinated efforts of many different individuals and institutions.

---

7   Green Infrastructure Toolkit. Atlanta Regional Commission, the Georgia Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land.

The eastern area between the Gordon Highway and Interstate-520 is primarily wetlands.

Recommended Regulatory Protections and Acquisition Strategies	
Resource	**Action Recommended**
Natural Resources	
Wetlands***	Prohibit removal of trees in wetlands without the trigger of a building permit application.
Streams	Implement a 75' Forest Buffer.
Agricultural Soils	Assign preferential assessments for agricultural and forestry property tax relief.
Wooded Areas and Orchards	Adhere to a Zero-Net-Tree-Loss Policy and use the Georgia Forest Land Protection Act for tax relief.
Groundwater Recharge	Use Low Impact Development (LID) strategies.
Recreational Resources	
Floodplain***	Prohibit development in the Flood way and regulate site design in the Flood way Fringe.
Public Parks	Create a Comprehensive Open Space Plan.
Greenway Trails	Create a Purchase of Development Rights Program (example: Carroll County, GA)
*** Primary Conservation Resources.	

Green Infrastructure Database and Priorities Map

This Agenda recommends that the City prepare itself for the opportunities that will come along by creating an inventory and tracking system of potential green infrastructure system components. Other communities have successfully used this strategy. Nearby examples include the **Protected Lands Inventory and Database** listed in the Green Infrastructure Toolkit prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

This database should include measures to define, protect, expand (where appropriate), and link key Natural Resource Areas and Recreational Resource Areas with important community destinations (schools, shopping community services). Integral to this effort would be protection measures for the most environmentally sensitive areas bordering stream corridors and expanded trail and greenway systems along Butler, Rocky, and Spirit Creeks.

The primary goal of the "Protected Lands Inventory and Database" is to **bring green space up for automatic consideration during routine governmental procedures** such as land banking, code enforcement, public service expansion, and development approval. The importance of the City's regulatory systems in creating incentives for environmentally sensitive choices cannot be overstated.

The ARC also uses a **Green Infrastructure Priorities Map**, this is an example for Augusta in green space, cultural resource, and scenic agricultural area protection. For example, their map of potential greenspace lands contains twelve readily available layers for analysis:

• Drinking water supply watersheds

• FEMA Floodplains

• Wetlands

• Slopes greater than 10% grade

• 300' buffer of all streams, rivers, lakes and ponds over 2-acres

• Forested and Agricultural land

• Historic Structures

• Quarter mile buffer along Scenic Byways

• 500' buffer around existing Greenspaces larger than 10-acres

• 500' buffer around existing bike and pedestrian trails

• Wildlife habitat as recognized by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources

• Potential conservation opporutnity areas as recognized by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources

The following two graphic maps are a mash-up of Augusta's natural and recreational resources that are currently found in the City's GIS system. This Agenda recommends that the City of Augusta combine these two maps, weighting each of the resources according to community value to create a Green Infrastructure Priorities Map. This method largely uses established measures taken from the **Georgia Land Conservation Tax Credit Program** (GLCTCP).

Potential New Greenspaces:

1. Rocky Creek Regional Park

2. Rocky Creek Greenway Extension

3. Savannah River Target Area

4. Butler Creek Greenway Extension

5. Butler Creek Conservation Land

6. Spirit Creek Greenway Extension

Existing Park / Conservation Area

Land Under Negotiation

Land to be Considered for Conservation / Greenspace Protection

Recreation Potential due to Floodplain

Potential Creekway Trail

Canal National Heritage Area

Raes Creek Community Garden
Lake Olmstead

Augusta River Walk
Augusta Common

"The Patch" Public Golf Course

Pembleton Park
Oates Creek Basin

Augusta Levee Trail
Rocky Creek Outdoor Classroom

Savannah Bluffs River Park

Diamond Lakes Regional Park
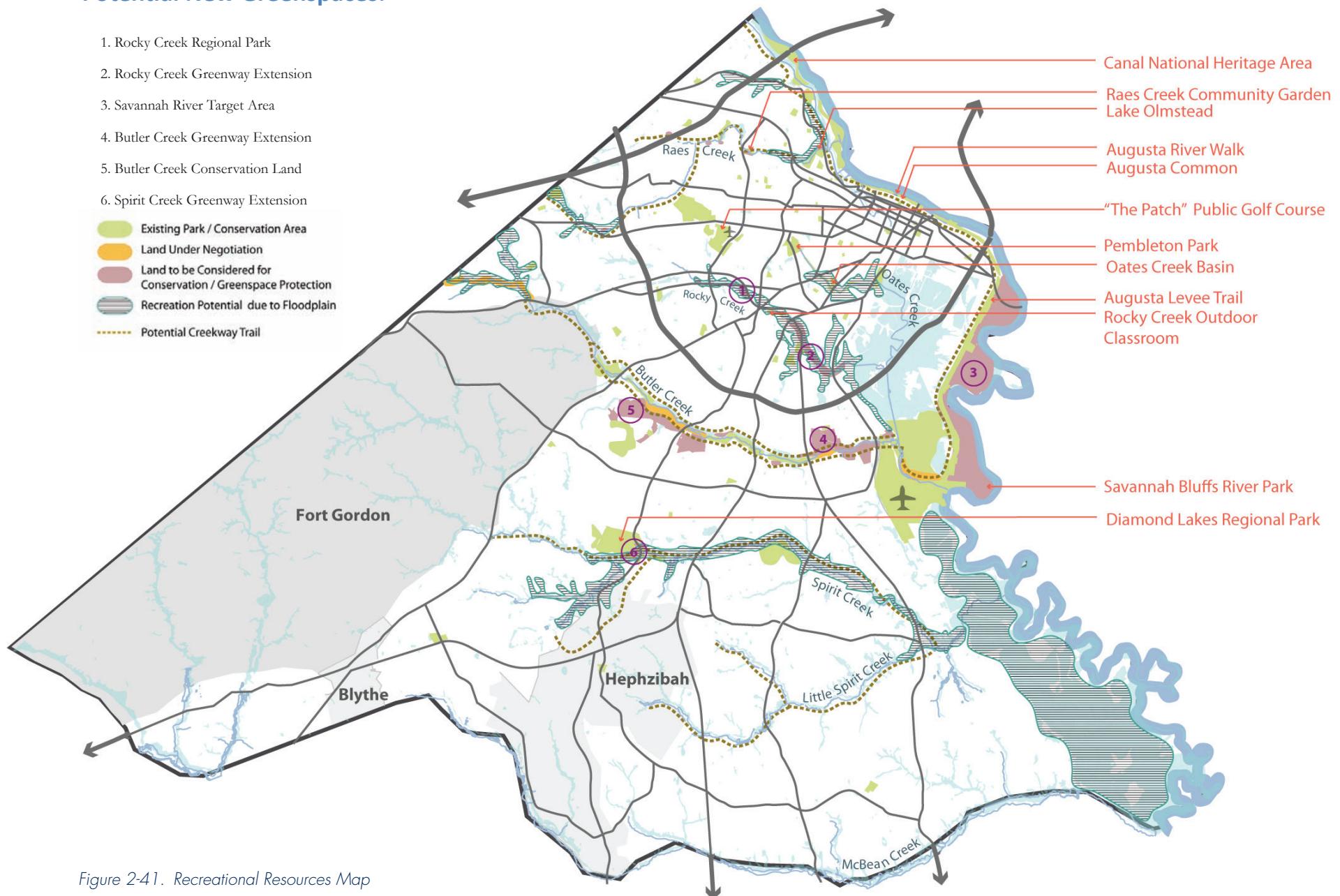
Figure 2-41. Recreational Resources Map
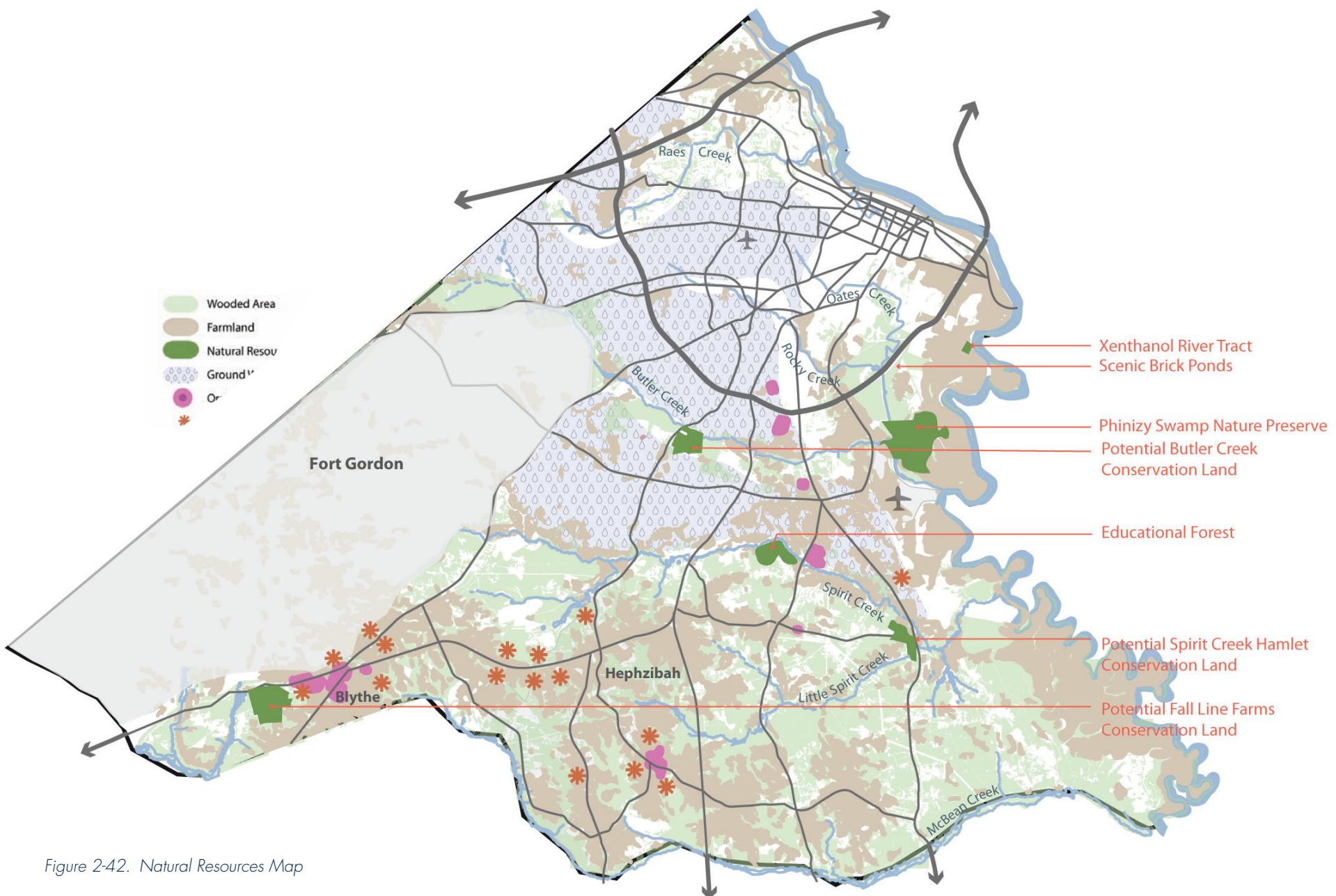
Figure 2-42. Natural Resources Map

Legend:
- Wooded Area
- Farmland
- Natural Resou[rce]
- Ground [Water]
- Or[chard]
- [asterisk symbol]

Map labels:
- Raes Creek
- Oates Creek
- Rocky Creek
- Butler Creek
- Spirit Creek
- Little Spirit Creek
- McBean Creek
- Fort Gordon
- Blythe
- Hephzibah

Callouts:
- Xenthanol River Tract
- Scenic Brick Ponds
- Phinizy Swamp Nature Preserve
- Potential Butler Creek Conservation Land
- Educational Forest
- Potential Spirit Creek Hamlet Conservation Land
- Potential Fall Line Farms Conservation Land

Recommended Land Development Approval Process:

Green Infrastructure in the Development Approval Process

This Agenda proposes that the city evaluate all new development proposals against how they support and enhance Augusta's Green Infrastructure network. This evaluation will be aided through an enhanced Sketch Plan review process that requires a site inventory of existing features upon which to base decisions regarding the site's development

The Sketch Plan currently required by the Subdivision Ordinance nebulously asks the site designer to draw the 'proposed layout of streets' and 'other features' in relationship to 'existing conditions'. This lack of clarity is troublesome on both the developers side (who is unsure what to submit) and the planning commissions side (who is potential unsure of the impacts of what the developer may or may not be proposing).

This Agenda recommends furthering the intent of the **Sketch Plan Phase** through two new required maps that will contain all existing natural and man-made site features. Also at this stage, an optional site visit is encouraged. This will further enhance the conversation between the developer's site designer and the planning department.

Called a **Context Map** and an **Existing Resources Map**, these documents and their requirements are further broken down further in Appendix 2.

In order to properly administer this new development approval process, Augusta should provide training and support for planning staff to enable more thorough interaction with and ability to give guidance to developers during the Sketch Plan review and Site Visit phases in the following subject areas:

• Importance of linking adjacent elements of Augusta's Green Infrastructure network to adjoining districts and uses.

• Matters of urban design, such as residential smart growth principles and traditional neighborhood design strategies.

• Natural resource protection and enhancement through land development.
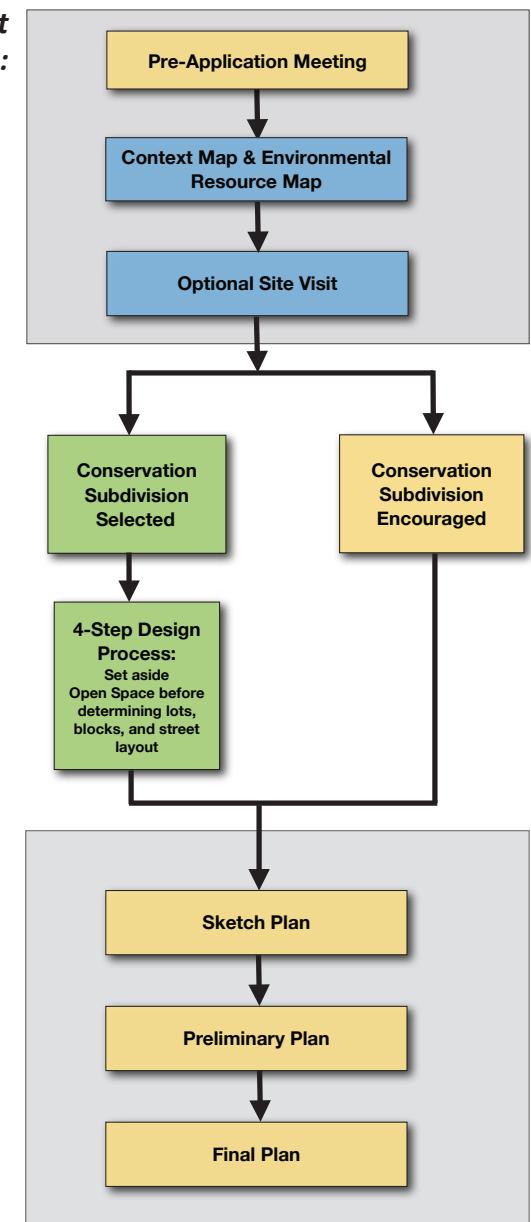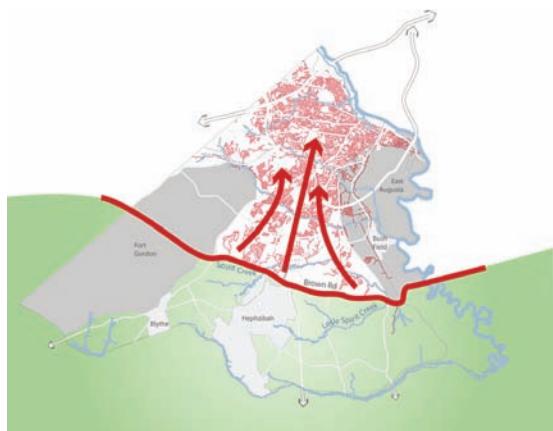
Figure 2-43. Development Approval Process for Determining Greenway Set Asides.

Key Changes to Direct Growth to the "Right" Locations

In order for Augusta to use sustainable development to contribute to an improved quality of life, the city needs a set of influential, yet cost-effective tools. The tools to support the community's vision largely reside within its land development regulations. The following paragraphs detail key changes to support Augusta's natural resource network during the development process.

Limit sewer expansion and redirect growth towards already sewered areas

Updating the Water and Sewer Master Plan

Of key importance to this Agenda is the Water and Sewer Master Plan, which is due to undergo a revision in the next year. It should be revised to discontinue sewer expansion to the most rural parts of Augusta, keeping sewer capacity out of the Little Spirit Creek basin and other areas to the south. Then, it should create a schedule of long-range improvements consistent with the Prototypical Projects map to undertake modest utility extensions and improvements to provide these urban services to pockets and areas that currently lack them. Also helpful would be the inclusion for public access and trail construction along its utility easements, in support of the recommended Green Infrastructure Plan's public accessibility provisions.

Create an Agriculture and Timber Protection Zone

Currently, Augusta uses an "A" district for areas that permit commercial agriculture. However, this district allows for the same density and lot size development as the "R-1" residential zone does, effectively eliminating any incentive or obligation to retain or protect agricultural uses. The effect of the current "A" district is to hasten the decline of working lands by allowing residences to compete with agricultural use of land. This means that under current regulations, developers can take advantage of Augusta by developing in a way that contradicts the Comprehensive Plan, this Agenda, and the community's vision while inflicting unsustainable expenses on its fiscal balance.

In order to encourage development to occur in areas of existing infrastructure until a time when expansion is necessary, many Georgia counties have enacted Agricultural Protection Zoning to limit land speculation and maintain existing farmlands, making it easier for farmers and timber operators to continue working their land.

This Agenda recommends the development of an **Agricultural and Timber Protection Zone** that keeps working lands affordable and demonstrates that the county sees them as a long-term, economically viable activity instead of merely an interim land use.
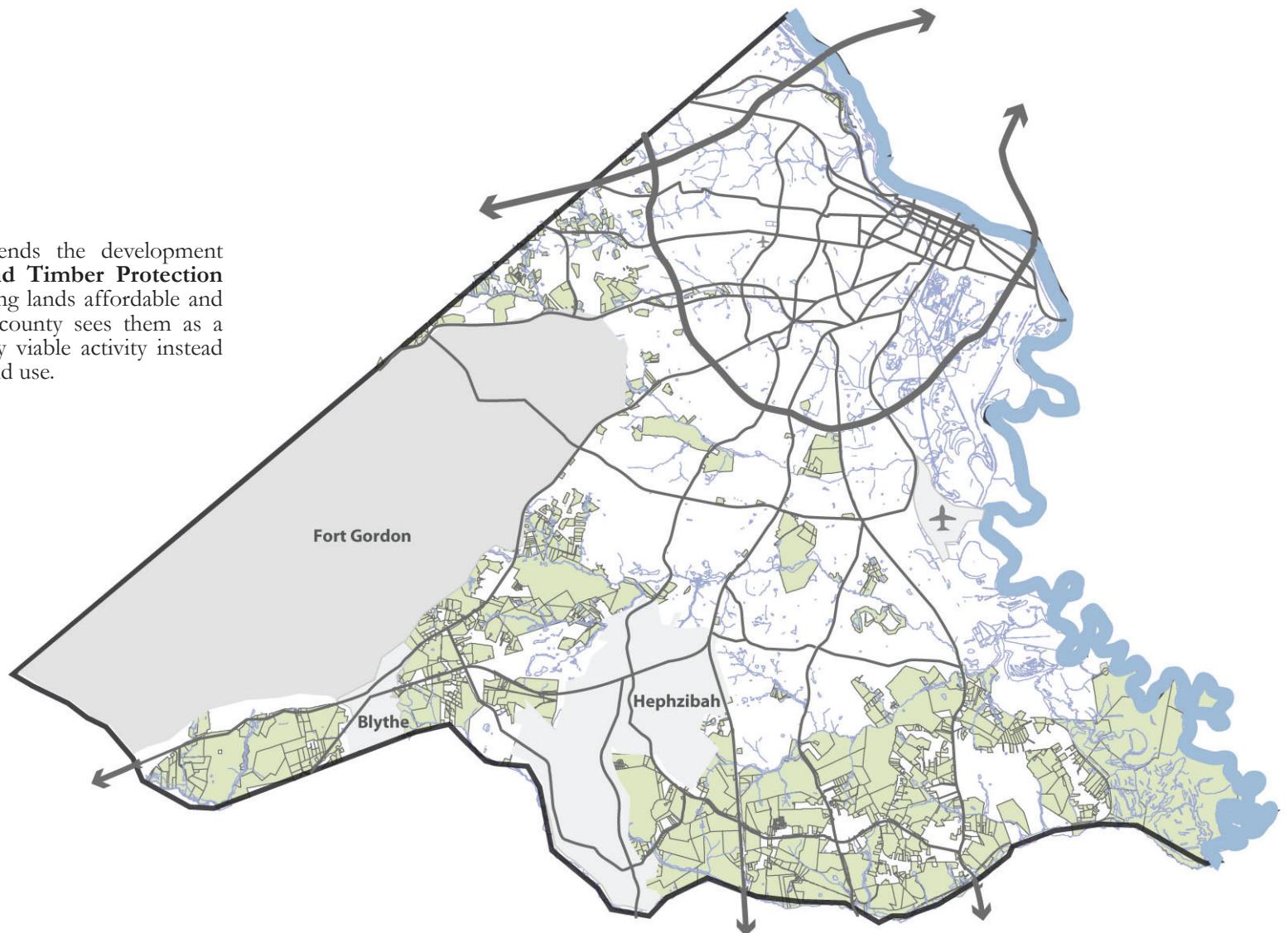

Figure 2-44. Parcels currently zoned "A", over 6 acres in size

Designate Zoning Overlay Districts for Priority Projects to Encourage Quality Development

This Agenda defines eleven priority project areas for future development. The zoning ordinance in these areas should be modified to recalibrate dimensional and walkability standards to encourage development of a more lively, attractive, and cost-efficient urban environment. The modifications should be developed so that they can be replicated at other locations in the City where developments similar to the prototypical projects are built. This Agenda anticipates these projects continuing to support the growth and development of Augusta in a manner that is consistent with the desires of its residents.

As a primary recommendation of this Agenda, a main goal behind these **Prototype Project Overlay Districts** is to enable a more focused site plan review, along with modifications to required site dimensions and parking ratios, to ensure quality development in focused nodes, rather than the aging linear strip developments of yesteryear. These overlay districts are discussed more thoroughly in Appendix 2.
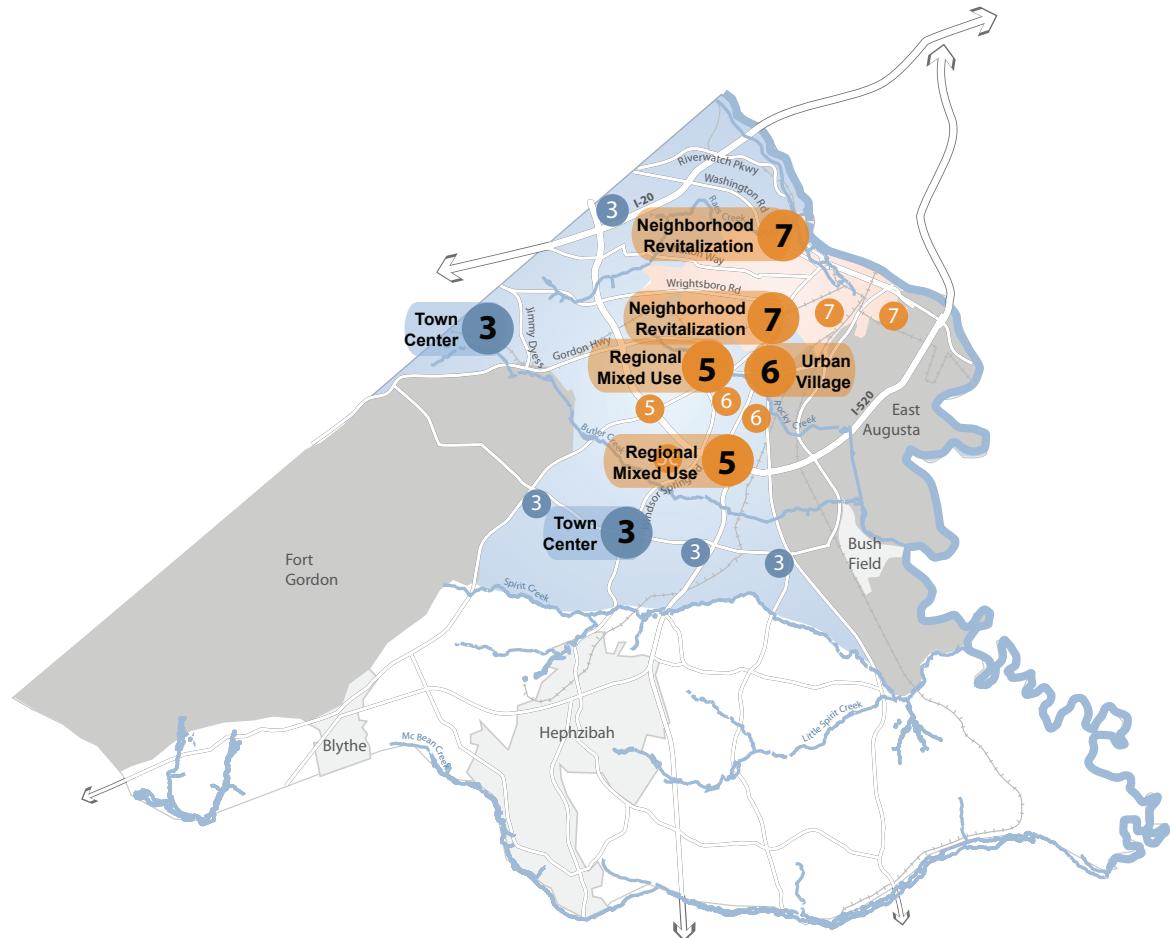
Figure 2-45. Prototype Project areas with Priority Project Overlay Zones in Urban and Suburban Augusta

Enhance Conservation Subdivision Options

The objective of a "Conservation Subdivision" is to enable a largely residential development, grouping units on the most buildable portion of a tract, thus reducing the amount of traditional infrastructure necessary and preserving at least 50 percent of the tract for natural drainage systems, open space, and environmentally and culturally sensitive areas. Several important components of include[8]:

• Permit flexibility of design in order to promote environmentally sensitive and efficient use of the land

• Preserve in perpetuity any sensitive natural resources such as groundwater, floodplains and flood ways, wetlands, streams, steep slopes, woodlands and wildlife corridors and habitat.

• Promote interconnected greenways for wildlife and residents.

This Agenda recommends adding two additional types of conservation subdivisions into the ordinance, for application to different types of property in Suburban and Rural Augusta.

---

8   Growing Greener: Conservation By Design: Model Ordinance Version 2.0, Natural Lands Trust, 2007.

For ease of application and administration, the Zoning Ordinance should define several types of Conservation Subdivisions:					
	Currently in Ordinance?	**Required Greenspace**	**Residential Density**	**Commercial Uses**	**Zoning Allowances**
Basic Conservation with Neutral Density	Yes	50% (or 40% for existing upper-moderate densities)	Neutral (as according to existing zoning)	None	By Right
Country Properties	No	0%	Very Low (1du/10 acres)	None	By Right
Rural Hamlets	No	70%	Higher Density (than existing)	Up to 15%	By Conditional Use

In Rural Augusta, Country Properties and Rural Hamlets are recommended types of conservation subdivisions. Country properties are essentially lots between 3.5 and 10 acres in size. These would be permissible "by-right", and therefore require no special approval, due to their very low densities. Rural hamlets have smaller lots, but with 70% greenspace set aside required and the ability to construct a small retail district abutting neighborhood. These would require additional development approval, due to their compact nature in a rural area.

In Suburban Augusta, Basic Conservation with Neutral Density developments are to be encouraged. These allow developers to build the same number of houses that the existing zoning allows, just on a slightly smaller lot size, with up to 50% of the land set aside for public greenspace. "Figure 2-48. Multiple entrances, with front yards facing a street and the creek making it a safe, public way. Smaller lot sizes lead to closer community and around 50% of the land is set aside for recreational enjoyment." on page 2-119 is a good example of a Neutral Density, Basic Conservation development.

This type of Conservation Subdivision is not new to Augusta. This Agenda recommends emphasizing and educating applicable land owners and developers on changes for all new development proposals in Augusta, then encouraging the application of conservation subdivisions to areas with high levels of ecological significance.

Several economic advantages of conservation subdivisions include[9]:

• The value of a 1/2 acre lot with 50% of the neighborhood being publicly owned open space is slightly greater than the value of a 1-acre lot with no public open space.

• These smaller lots tend to sell faster than in conventional developments due to their aesthetic appeal and lack of need for private open space maintenance.

• Lots in conservation subdivisions are less expensive to build since leaving land in its natural state is cheaper than building infrastructure.

This Agenda intends to encourage the selection of the conservation subdivision method of land development by the developer as their preferred subdivision building method in Augusta by implementing the previously mentioned Agriculture and Timber Protection Zone. This zone will restrict all currently undeveloped land zoned "A" to large minimum lot size. If the developer wishes to build more homes, they can apply for a Hamlet or Country Property zone in Rural Augusta or a Conservation Subdivision with Neutral Density in Suburban Augusta. All three of these options would allow for more homes than the Agricultural and Timber Protection Zone while still protecting critical "Primary Conservation Resources".

Therefore, it is critical to set the Agricultural and Timber Protection Zone to a high minimum lot size (10+ acres) in order to be able to leverage the developer's desire for additional density into a desirable, environmentally sensitive, connected to natural lands, subdivision development.

9   Mohamed, Rayman. The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions: Price premiums, Improved Costs, and Absorption Rates. URBAN AFFAIRS REVIEW, Vol. 41, No. 3, January 2006.

Traditional Subdivision Approach

#2a, Rural Hamlet site example
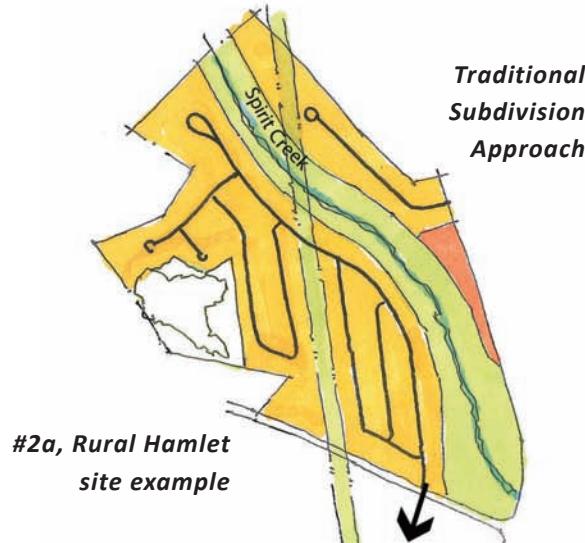
Figure 2-47. Singular entrace, with back yards facing the creek, essentially privatizing that natural amenity
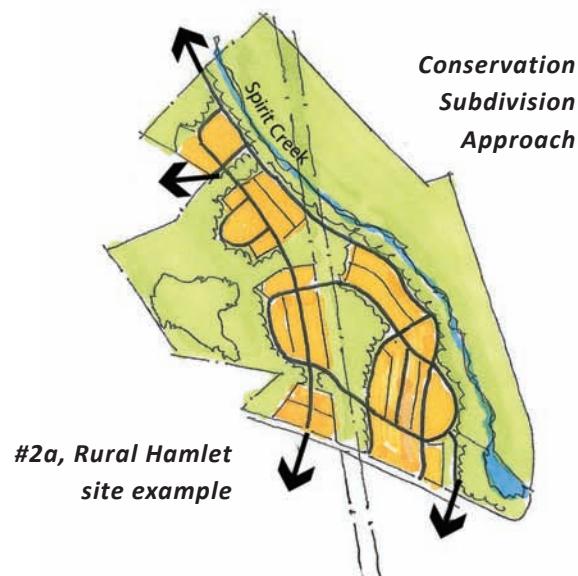
Conservation Subdivision Approach

#2a, Rural Hamlet site example

Figure 2-48. Multiple entrances, with front yards facing a street and the creek making it a safe, public way. Smaller lot sizes lead to closer community and around 50% of the land is set aside for recreational enjoyment.

Prototypical Projects with Conservation Subdivisions:
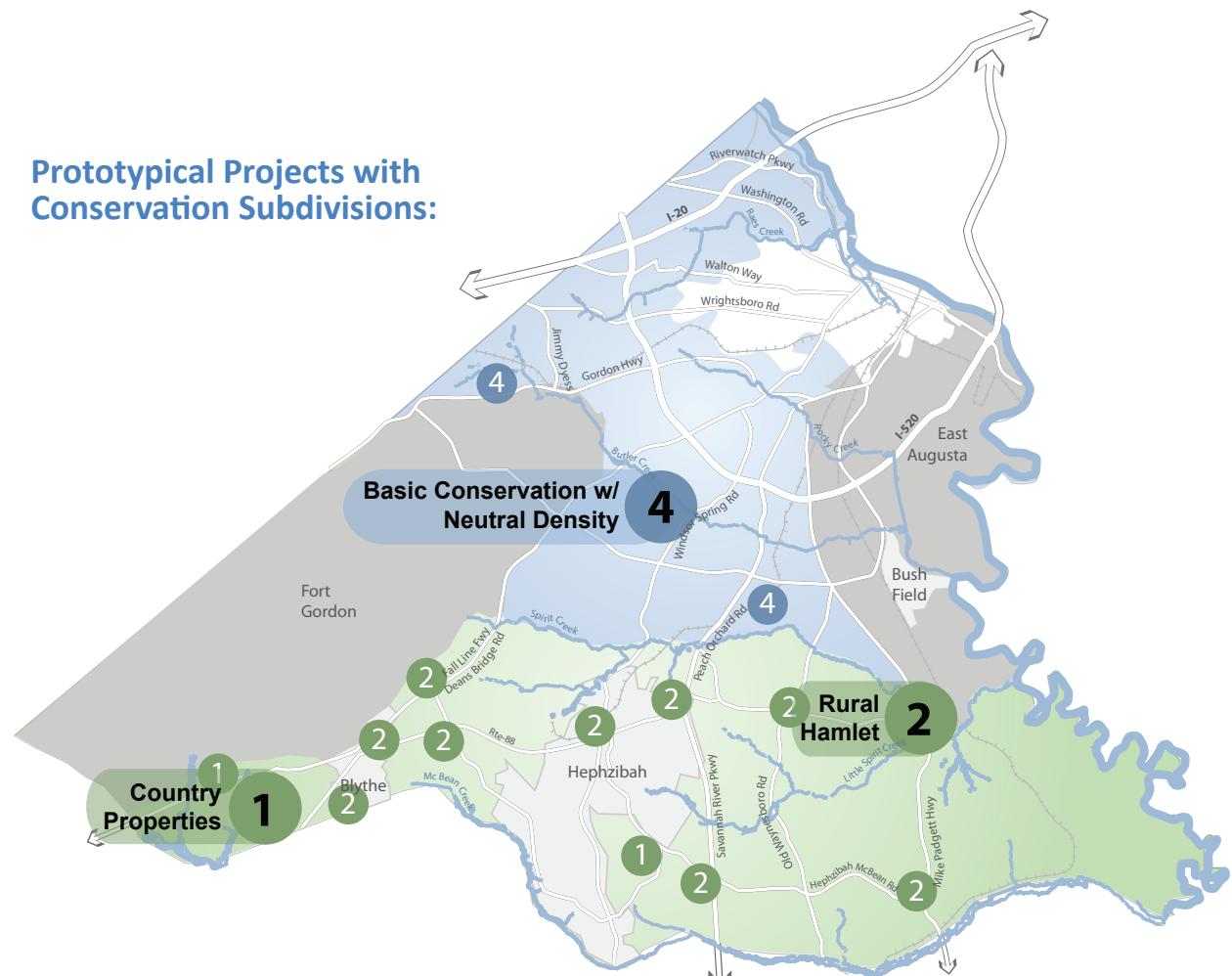
Figure 2-46. Prototypical Projects and alternative locations in Rural and Suburban Augusta

Develop Street Connectivity Requirements

Connectivity is important for the health of Augusta residents, as connected streets encourage walking; form community identity, creates a sense of place; and reduces traffic congestion and trip length[10].

Over the last forty years, residential and non-residential development patterns have created a lack of internal vehicular and pedestrian connectivity. It was assumed that communities built with this type of roadway layout had less traffic and fewer traffic delays on neighborhood streets. However, recent studies have found these assumptions to be false[11].

Residential subdivisions that are dominated by cul-de-sacs provide discontinuous street networks, reduce the number of sidewalks, provide few alternate travel routes and force all trips onto a limited number of arterial roads. A well-designed, highly-connected network helps reduce the volume of traffic and traffic delays on major streets (arterials and major collectors), and ultimately improves livability in communities by providing parallel routes and alternative route choices.

The proposed Augusta street connectivity requirements are intend to promote more efficient travel patterns and increase roadway safety. Street design options and connectivity regulatory issues are discussed further in Appendix 2.

In addition, this Agenda recommends setting up a **reserve fund** that developers are required to contribute to if they choose not to develop a hammerhead or throughway connection. This fund will be used for future roadway connections. Also, the right-of-way must be dedicated at this time.

---

10   Division of Planning, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Street Connectivity, Zoning and Subdivision Model Ordinance. March 2009.

11   Chapter 5 Walkable Subdivision Ordinance. Nashville, TN Zoning Ordinance. Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee.

Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design to Create "Walkable Subdivisions"

The Walkable Subdivision concept has been used in model regulations throughout the Southeastern United States including communities such as Nashville, (TN), East Atlanta (GA), and the entire state of Virginia through its new Virginia Department of Transportation requirements of street connectivity. The idea of Walkable Subdivisions is to achieve urban, highly integrated, and economically valuable neighborhoods with public parks and plazas.

Similar to nationally recognized Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND), a premium is placed on connectivity (pedestrian, vehicular, and open space) and integration into the surrounding community in "Walkable Subdivisions". Therefore, streets are required to connect, except where physically impossible, to existing adjoining streets, parks, and sidewalks or to create stub outs for future connection if adjacent to an empty parcel.

A good example of a traditionally designed neighborhood can be found in "Figure 2-50. Connected streets and a well-landscaped neighborhood common. Red represent throughway streets that connect abutting neighborhoods, town center developments, and greenway trails along the creek." on page 2-121.

Several key features of these mixed-use, urban neighborhoods include[12]:

• Street networks scaled relative to the anticipated uses of the block, which disperse traffic and offer a variety of pedestrian and vehicular routes.

• A center than ideally includes a mix of uses and building types with a well landscaped community gathering place.

• A variety of housing choices with a diverse mix of activities (school, shops, work) to provide basic, daily needs in close proximity.

• A range of transportation options including cars, transit, bikes and walking. Through greater street connectivity, Walkable Subdivisions can improve the function of the arterial road system by keeping local trips on local streets.

• Well designed publicly accessible open spaces.

---

12   Chapter 5 Walkable Subdivision Ordinance. Nashville, TN Zoning Ordinance. Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee.

Traditional Subdivision Approach
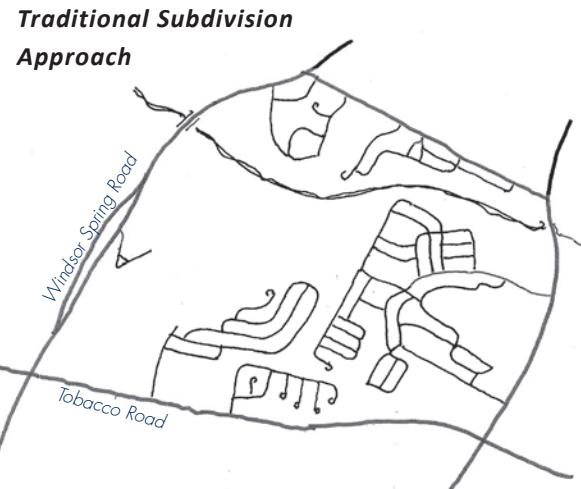
Figure 2-49. Disconnected neighborhoods, from each other and the nearby shopping experience.
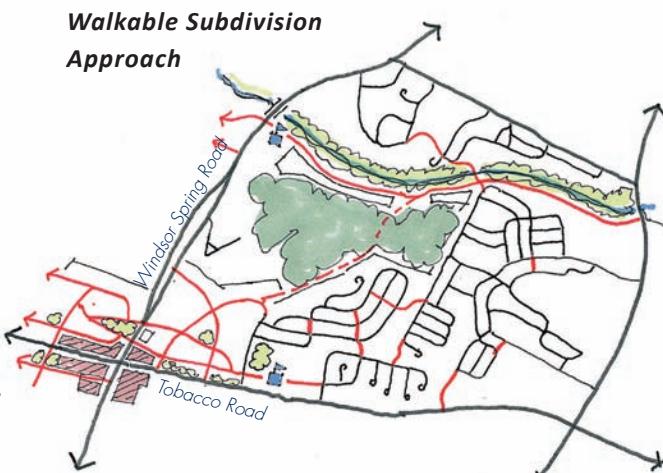
Walkable Subdivision Approach

Figure 2-50. Connected streets and a well-landscaped neighborhood common. Red represent through-way streets that connect abutting neighborhoods, town center developments, and greenway trails along the creek.

Promote Low Impact Development Standards

The primary water protection and storm water management technique recommended by this Agenda is Low Impact Development (LID). This term is used to describe a land development and engineering design approach to managing storm water runoff. It emphasizes conservation and use of numerous small on-site measures and natural features to protect water quality, as opposed to large end-of-pipe detention ponds and proprietary filters systems.

Augusta can take a first, pro-active step in reducing the impacts of growth and development on local water resources by supporting the ongoing collaborations between local engineering firms and the Augusta Engineering Department in creating a city-wide switch to LID standards over traditional storm drainage design.

Augusta has been fortunate in receiving state and federal funding to create a system of highways and arterial streets that make it quick and easy to get from one part of the city to another. The problem is that the distances to services are long and the roadways are often unattractive. The businesses along them are generally not conducive to pedestrian activity and do not create places to linger.

Enhancing Augusta's Roadways

Anatomy of the Roadway System

A road network has two basic components: the place where people want to go (the development along side the road) and the public right-of-way to get them there (the roadway itself).
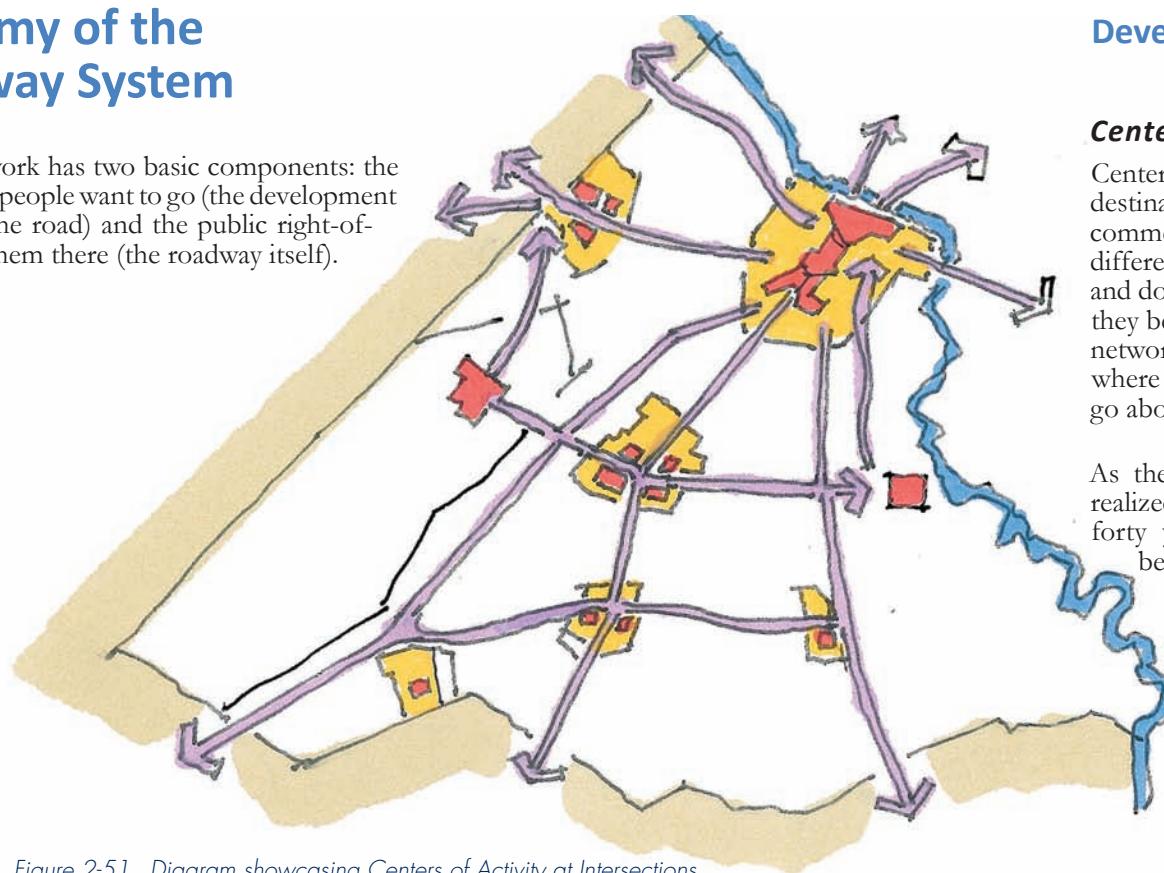
Figure 2-51. Diagram showcasing Centers of Activity at Intersections

Development along the Roadway

Centers of Activity on Intersections

Centers of activity typically occur at major, destination intersections. Vibrant with commerce and civic activity, they come in different sizes: hamlets, town centers, villages, and downtowns. And if they are developed well, they become important gathering places, with a network of interlacing streets of different sizes, where people can walk from place to place and go about their business.

As the result of the exhilarating accessibility realized by the automobile over the last forty years, the need to concentrate activity became less important. However, as the segments between major intersections haphazardly filled in, further and further from the centers of activity, these destination centers that gave original purpose for the corridor became less important places. The market has not been able to match the amount of new commercial land available, leading to struggling businesses along overly-wide roadways.

A **Road Diet** *is a treatment given to an urban roadway in which the number of lanes is reduced, and the freed space converted to parking, bike lanes, landscaping, walkways, or medians.*

Commercial Uses on Corridor Segments between Intersections

Prior to the advent of the car, roadway corridors were typically rural in nature, lined with forest and farmland. With the arrival of the car, people's range of activity expanded and retail growth, sought out cheap and accessible roadside land.

The properties in these 'corridor segments' between major intersections have been hurt by retail investors' abandonment of the strip format. The fascination with the auto-oriented strip has ended. Investors are now looking to place retail in larger clusters at strategic intersections.

Therefore, these intersections are increasing in value while the segments between intersections continue to loose value. The heart of this Agenda's recommended strategy lies in realigning the current pattern of land uses with contemporary market demand.

As a result, the roadways are visually unattractive. There is not the public money available to landscape them well. Because much of the roadside edge is lined with poorly maintained commercial uses, the view from the corridor is ugly. Many of the businesses along the road are cannot afford to maintain their landscaping, signage or even buildings to an attractive standard, as called for in the current regulations.

Public Right of Way

Several of Augusta's primary corridors are overly wide and are affecting the vitality of the surrounding commercial uses.

Roadway Design of Corridors

Roadways come in all widths, from country highway to country lane in Rural Augusta, regional interstate to a neighborhood street in Suburban Augusta, and landscaped boulevard to rear access alley in Urban Augusta. However, some roadways are overly-wide.

This abundance of excess pavement encourages speeding, and places bicyclists and pedestrians at far higher risk than a typical "Main Street". When the local merchants lining the road perceive that the overly-wide road is having negative affects on the ability of drivers to see their businesses, switch lanes, and pull over or that drivers are not pulling over because too many stops along the corridor are required, a road diet may make sense.

Road Diets run directly counter to traditional traffic engineering principles because they tend to reduce overall roadway capacity. However, in practice, road diets can cause vehicle speeds to readjust to a more optimal speed, increasing the throughput of vehicles per lane. For this reason, road diets typically reduce congestion, and always increase safety for all users of the roadway[13].

The example photos on the next page are from Athens, Georgia. Baxter Street is an arterial roadway with average daily trips of 20,000 vehicles.

A *s a safety demonstration project in 1999, the County narrowed the vehicular lanes, added striping for bike lanes, and increased roadside planting.*

13   The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Safety Information System. *Summary Report: Evaluation of Lane Reduction "Road Diet" Measures and Their Effects on Crashes and Injuries.* May 25, 2010. http://www.tfhrc.gov/safety/hsis/pubs/04082/index.htm

Baxter Street in Athens Georgia, before "road diet"

Same stretch of roadway, after their "road diet" reduced crash frequency along the corridor by 53% while creating a designated bike lane and increased roadway plantings.

The result was a 53% decrease in overall crashes, a 4% traffic diversion, an easier to cross street, slower vehicular speeds, and various subsequent home and business improvements. In a survey taken a year after the improvements 47% of drivers said the perceived street width was "just right"[14](33% responded with, "maybe" and 20% replied, "no").

Road Diets intend to :

• Reduce vehicle speed

• Reduce collisions and injuries

• Reduce conflict points

• Improve sight distance

• Improve mobility and access

• Improve "livability" and resident quality of life

• Enhance the community's economy

---

14   Rosales, Jennifer. Presentation to ITE International Annual Meeting. August 9, 2005. http://www.slideshare.net/streetsblog/applying-the-road-diet-for-livable-communities

Restructuring Land Uses along the Road

This Agenda recommends that Augusta embrace traditional development patterns and encourage future growth around its existing centers of activity at major intersections by discouraging further expansion of commercial development along its corridors. Additionally, when such 'center of activity' development does occur, it should present a pleasant and attractive 'view from the road'.

There are three core initiatives that interact to create the corridors that can make the Augusta's roadways more attractive and enhance its image as the "Garden City":

• Create policy that concentrates new development at major, strategic intersections.

• Encourage housing and office uses in the 'segments in-between major intersections'.

• Enforce private sector roadside property landscape, signage and upkeep standards, while the public sector installs planting and streetscape improvements in the public rights of way.

Each is discussed further in the following pages.

"Figure 2-53. Customer base for various retail / business project areas" on page 2-127 illustrates four intersection types, from Regional Shopping Node to Rural Hamlet, each with their own market catchment areas. Note that the Hamlet is an "outpost" and as such provides the less populated Rural Area with basic, every day convenience needs.

Areas inside the "Greater South Augusta" Trade Area

This Agenda lists sites for concentrated development, with retail components, around key intersections.

- I-520 Interchange at Peach Orchard Road, is a Regional Shopping site which is the most attractive location for expanded, diversified retailing in Suburban Augusta.

- The Deans Bridge and Gordon Highway intersection is centrally located and in position to be a regional and community focused "Community Business Center" that aims to increase employment opportunities at the center of Augusta's population.

- Tobacco Road and Windsor Spring Road, is an attractive site for a "Town Center" district.

Areas outside the "Greater South Augusta" Trade Area:

- Mike Padgett at Brown Road forms a Rural Hamlet to access basic convenience goods and services, such as was formerly found at the country store.

- I-520 Interchange at Sandbar Ferry Road creates the new and most convenient entry point into Augusta for points north and east, as it is an ideal location to develop an attractive commercial area catering to the passing and arriving motorist.
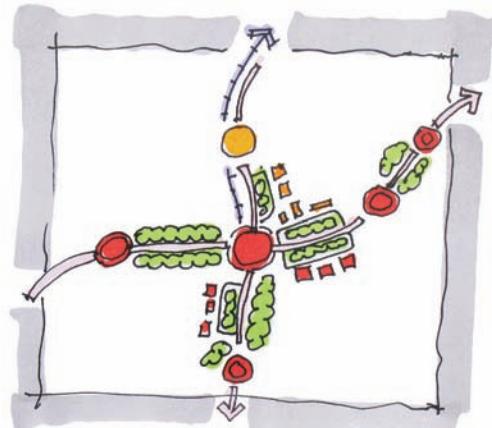
Figure 2-52. Diagram showing Residential or Office Ordinance on arterial throughfares near Prototype Project areas

Additional Support

In general, all of Augusta's major intersections should be taller, denser, and busier than the areas around them. Therefore, this Agenda recommends restricting some zones that allow retail to zones that only allow housing, office space, civic uses, recreational facilities and open space through a new **Residential and Office Ordinance** for up to a mile out from the Project Area boundaries[15].

The intent of the separation is to provide a well-landscaped gateway into the project area and avoid competing commercial strips to the designated shopping areas in the project area. Fortunately, this suggested restructuring of land uses can build on the accelerating preference of the shopping industry to concentrate itself at major intersections[16].

---

15   Whittier, CA developed a similar ordinance for their Whittier Boulevard Specific Plan in 2005.

http://www.insidewhittier.org/cgi-bin/site.cgi?whittierblvd

16   Dunham-Jones, Ellen, and June Williamson. Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.

*T*his Agenda aims to refocus development energy and resources at major intersections. Prototypical Projects recommended as part of this Agenda are typically located at major intersections throughout the city. This approach can be replicated at other favorable intersections throughout the City.
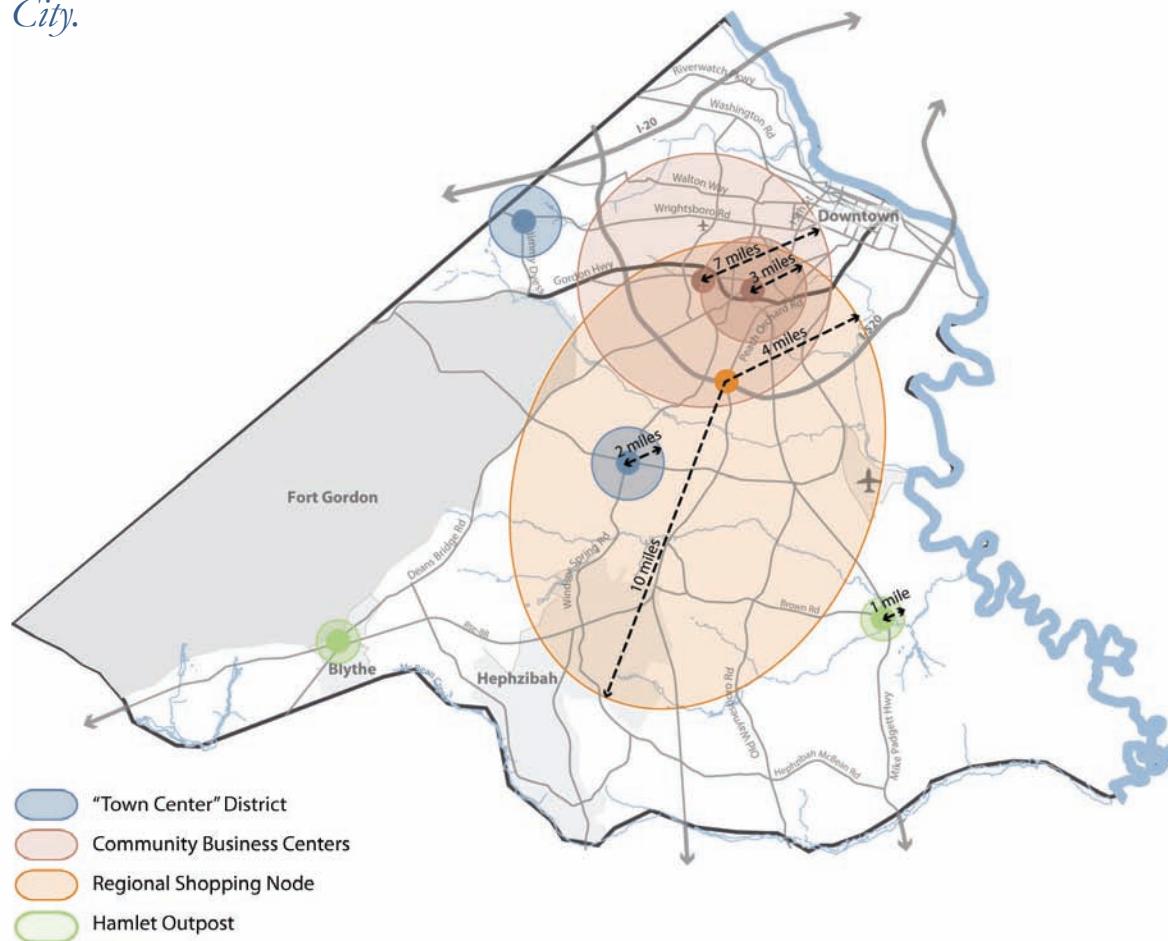

Figure 2-53. Customer base for various retail / business project areas

Development Strategies for Corridor Segments Between Intersections

The intersection-oriented activity centers described above are linked together by a road network of mixed-use avenues, boulevards, highways, and parkways that connect key destinations throughout the Augusta region. Realization of the "Garden City" concept will require corridor revitalization strategies for the segments in-between.

For example, limiting the quantity of commercially zoned land along emerging suburban strips (like Tobacco Road) gives landowners and retailers the incentive and economic strength to maintain a high-quality environment, react more swiftly to societal trends, and evolve on site as the retailing world changes[17].

Strategy One...

Augusta has several options; all are applicable to different lengths of various corridors. Strategy One, is to **build upon the corridor's viable commercial enterprises**. This strategy would apply, for example, to the stretch of Gordon Highway between Highland Avenue and Peach Orchard. In this strip, various uses hold

---

17   *Restructuring the Commercial Strip. A Practical Guide for Planning the Revitalization of Deteriorating Strip Corridors*. United States Environmental Protection Agency.

maintained viability and would complement intended future development at the Rocky Creek Mixed Use Park. These uses include auto sales, diversified medical services buildings, and an assortment of light manufacturing, such as assembly and distribution. Similar investments in these areas should be promoted and complemented.

Further information on local government provided incentives is found in Appendix 2.

Additional Support

Local government can create incentives for segments with these existing assets by facilitating site acquisitions, building and façade improvements, and directing businesses owners to resources for business counseling and start-up capital.

Strategy Two...

Strategy Two, is to **support housing opportunities** in places where there are no viable commercial enterprises existing. This strategy is especially applicable to corridors along minor arterial and collector streets. It results in a

blended commercial and residential revitalization approach by encouraging convenience-oriented retailing at key intersections. And it proposes converting properties between these intersections to residential uses or to supportive uses such as side yards on perpendicular streets.

The Peach Orchard corridor in particular is pushes through an area that is heavily residential on either side. Restructuring the corridor with new housing will capture value for corridor owners, improve the neighborhoods behind the corridor, and make good use of existing infrastructure.

The method recommended by this Agenda is to present an **independent economic study** that demonstrates how market demand for retail can no longer provide expected profits, and how "trading in" retail entitlements for higher density residential entitlements will be more lucrative in the long term. Charlottesville, Virginia did such a market analysis and proposed viable new uses for each of their corridor segments based on local market demand[18].

---

18   *Restructuring the Commercial Strip. A Practical Guide for Planning the Revitalization of Deteriorating Strip Corridors*. United States Environmental Protection Agency.

"Figure 2-54. Restructuring plan for corridors in Suburban Augusta connecting to downtown" on page 2-129 locates the three strategies for Corridor Revitalization while differentiating between Suburban and Urban Augusta. Notice that it focuses retail growth (red) at major intersections where higher intensity land uses are recommended. Segments in-between the corridors are dealt with by either increasing housing entitlements (Strategy Two in yellow) or increased landscape code enforcement (Strategy Three in mauve).

Additional Support

In general, Augusta's pyramid zoning approach may enable many of the proposed Prototype Projects to be done without big zoning changes. As an example, all the business zones (P1, B1, and B2) permit almost any residential uses within the R-3C district, up to and including multi-family uses as high as 6-stories. So creating mixed use villages where strip centers are now located will not require much zoning change.

However, in a similar fashion, this leaves much of Augusta over-zoned. Most developed property within the city is not "maxed-out". For example, many of the areas currently in Zone B-2 do not seem to be developed beyond what would have been permitted in Zone B-1.

Therefore, this strategy recommends replacing certain business zones with **'residential entitlements'** to provide incentive for change and prevent often controversial 'down zoning'. The key to this strategy lies in the methods used to encourage residential use over retail, as landowners may be tempted to hold their properties in anticipation of a time when retail 'comes back'[19].

Strategy Three...

Strategy Three is oriented toward improving the appearance of the light industrial and automotive uses that appear on these aging corridors through **enforced code standards** for on-site screening and landscaping. There will be more discussion about the public sector side of this in the upcoming section titled, "A New Framework for Road and Street Design".

Figure 2-54. Restructuring plan for corridors in Suburban Augusta connecting to downtown

---

19   *Restructuring the Commercial Strip. A Practical Guide for Planning the Revitalization of Deteriorating Strip Corridors.* United States Environmental Protection Agency.
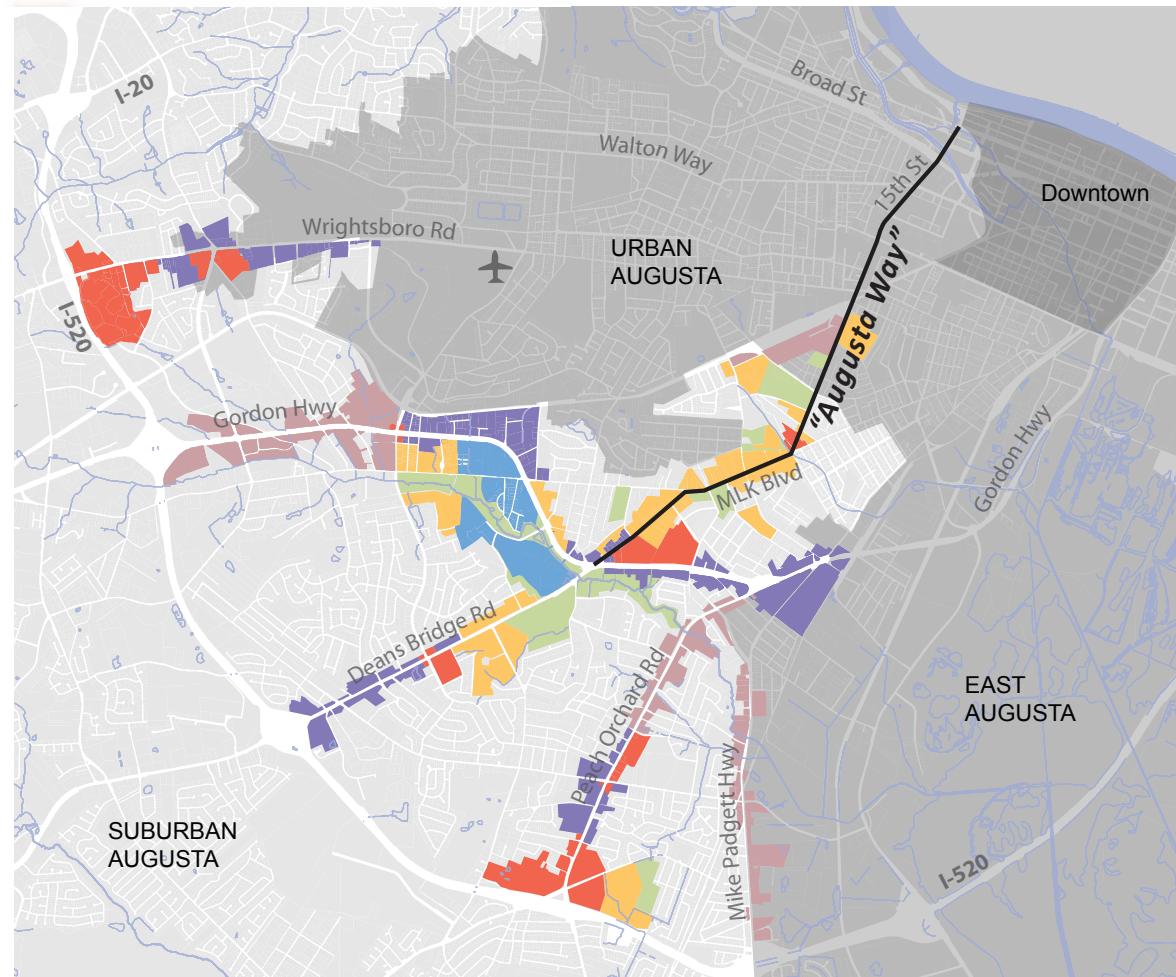
Framework for Road Design and Beautification

As stated earlier, an attractive roadway has two components, the development that lies along the roadway, and the design of the roadway itself. The development along the corridor segments between major intersections look the way they do because of the regulatory environment set up by existing zoning ordinances. By reframing these ordinances, Augusta can rework their corridors over time.

As Augusta moves to make this transition, one of the most powerful tools a community can deploy to stimulate revitalization is to finance the first steps itself. Living along a boulevard is more appealing than living along a commercial strip. The City's primary role, other than restructuring the regulatory environment, lies in redesigning the roadways themselves to encourage a pedestrian friendly, tree-lined amenity to attract housing.
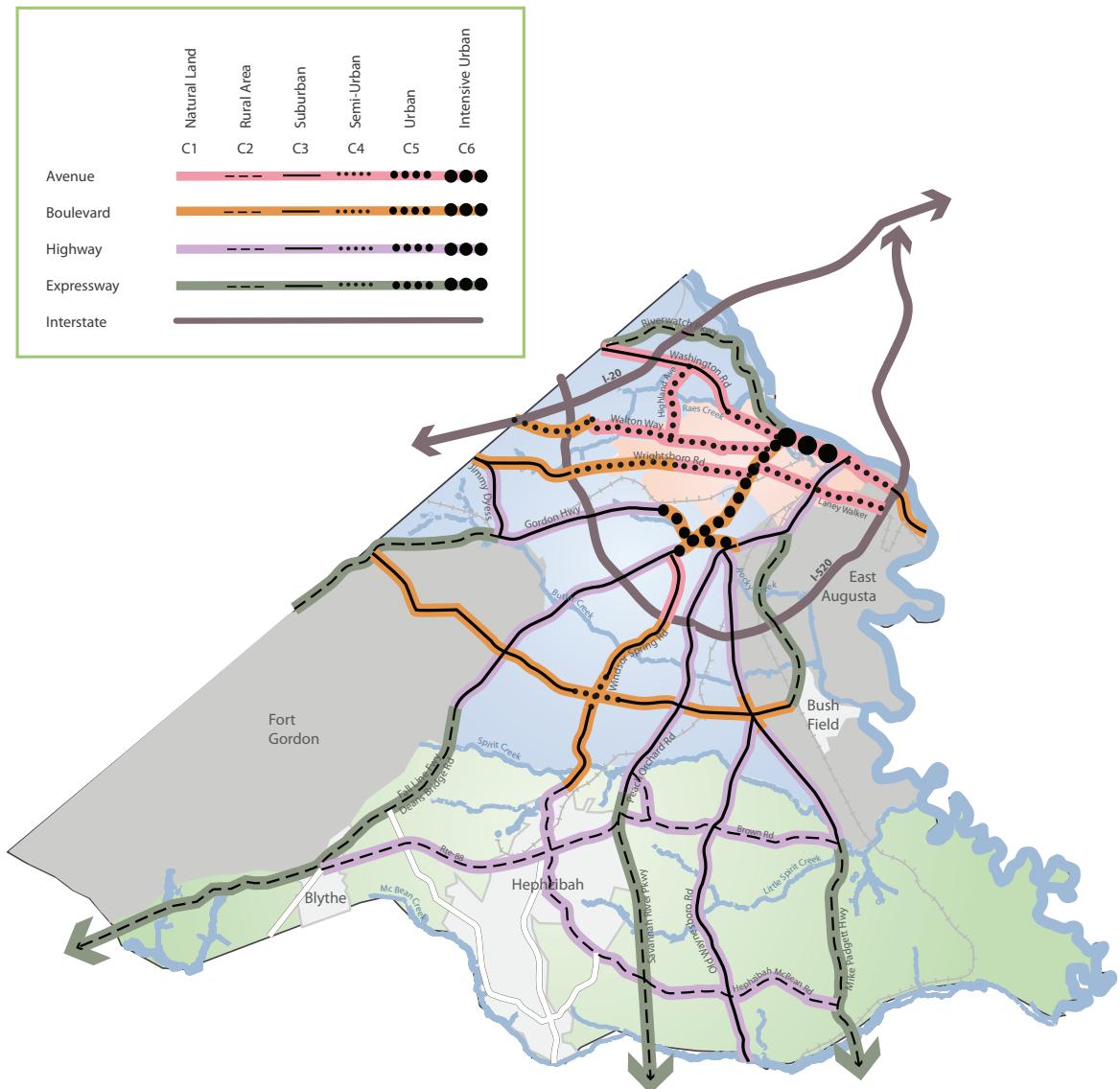
The concept of designing major urban thoroughfares (arterial routes and collectors) according to the context in which they are located is an emerging priority at the state and federal levels.

U.S. and Georgia DOT's Context Sensitive Solutions Approach

Context Sensitive Solutions is a project development process that spans project management, public involvement, and the resultant project commitments.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has joined the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Congress on Traditional Neighborhood Development, Federal Highway Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency in promoting this new design approach and published a manual of practice on the subject, "Context Sensitive Solutions" (CSS). The Georgia Department of Transportation (GA DOT) is in sync with the U.S. DOT, and has issued this purpose statement:

"CSS is an important part of future planning and design projects in Georgia, and our goal is that GA DOT will be among the transportation leaders in the exchange of CSS ideas and concepts."

With this commitment from Georgia DOT, the opportunity exists for Augusta to be the laboratory where these new design approaches can be demonstrated at a real life scale.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) balance the competing needs of diverse stakeholders beginning in the earliest stages of road project development; provides flexibility in applying design standards to produce a facility that is useful to all users regardless of the mode of travel they choose; and incorporates aesthetics as an integral part of the design. CSS considers community objectives, stakeholder priorities, land uses, and abutting activities to establish the urban design context (either existing or desired). This context zone is then considered along with the traffic-moving functional classification to determine a thoroughfare type.

The idea of the CSS method is to use context zones as an important factor to select a roadway type in conjunction with the functional classification to insure that each roadway design is supportive of the area and context it is intended to serve.

Figure 2-55. Context Sensitive Design options as applied to Augusta Corridors

Applying Context Sensitive Solutions in Augusta

The concept of using functional classifications, context zones, and thoroughfare types to develop the design proportions and details of a roadway will lead to more attractive designs that support economic and residential activities along the way. As the intensity of adjacent land uses increases, the roadside accommodates greater diversity of functions and the thoroughfare design changes to support the entirety of activities.

Therefore, to determine the design criteria for a given road, a new process is recommended:

1)   Select the Appropriate Functional Classification. See "Figure 4-17. Urban Thoroughfare Design Characteristics" on page 4-49.

2)   Select the Context Zone is selected from "Figure 4-16. Context Zone Characteristics" on page 4-47 by consulting this Development Agenda, the Comprehensive Plan, other area plans, zoning codes, historic district maps, and future land use plans; by considering pedestrian and transit activity; by studying context characteristics beyond the thoroughfare, including adjoining neighborhoods and districts; and by discovering community goals and objectives.

3)   Select the Thoroughfare Type that best fits the context zone and accommodates the criteria for the desired level of urban qualities, such as compactness, degree of mixed land uses, setback, transit, freight, bicycles, parking, walkability, landscaping, etc. Design characteristics of each thoroughfare type are as shown in "Figure 4-17. Urban Thoroughfare Design Characteristics" on page 4-49.

4)   The aesthetic goals of the city are then overlaid based on a major system of designated Garden City Gateway locations and Garden City Corridors, and a lesser sprinkling of specific Garden City Landscape Highlight Areas to produce, over time, a distinctive Augusta Garden City Streetscape system, as described in A New Framework for Road Design and Beautification.

Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) Organization for Augusta Corridors								
Functional Classification	Thoroughfare Types							
	Interstate	Freeway	Highway	Boulevard	Avenue	Street	Rural Road	Alley
Principal Arterial	████	████	████	████				
Minor Arterial			████	████	████	████		
Collector					████	████		
Local						████	████	████
Beautification Overlay Designations: Garden City Gateways *Garden City Corridors* *Garden City Landscape Highlights*								

Figure 2-56. Relationship to Context Sensitive Solution Thoroughfare Types

Safety and Comfort in Roadway Design

Another increasingly important tool to create sustainable communities is the concept of "Complete Streets". Complete streets laws insure that federal transportation dollars spent on road projects are used to improve conditions for all potential users of the road: car drivers, cyclists, elderly pedestrians, children, strollers and transit users.

Already, the nearby states of Florida and South Carolina have adopted complete street policy mandates to improve livability and encourage municipalities to allow for safe transportation by people who aren't currently in a car or motor vehicle[20].

This Agenda recommends that Augusta **adopt a Complete Streets law** making it mandatory that the planning, design and construction of state highways accommodates all types of travelers.

Complete Streets allows for comfortable sharing of the roadway between vehicle drivers, bicyclists, and pedestirans

---

20   National Complete Streets Coalition. www.completes-treets.org

> *"When will the people of Augusta awake to the fact that a tree which has been growing a hundred years can not be replaced in a day?"*
>
> *-- Julia Lester Dillon, 1871–1959, the South's first preeminent female Landscape Architect, who bestowed upon Augusta the nickname, "Garden City of the South"*

Garden City Beautification Overlays

Despite the positive contribution of the Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) approach to roadway planning and design, the design of a region's road system must go beyond functionality. Many of Augusta's roads are ugly, and people know it. The results of the public workshops held during this planning process made clear that Augusta citizens are concerned about the appearance of the city as viewed from its corridors. Augusta needs to refocus on presenting an image and brand that fulfills its "Garden City" aspiration.

Roadway beautification requires landscaping that complements basic roadway types but also provides an intentional visual character along selected public roadways whose intent is to convey an image of quality to both the individual roadways and to the districts they traverse.

The Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau is on a mission to help The Garden City live up to its name. They have approved a plan to allow the organization to work with the private sector to beautify Augusta's entryways through the newly formed **Garden City Development Fund** by the Community Foundation of the CSRA. The fund is designed to assist with beautification improvements, including landscaping. wayfinding signage, public art and visitor product development.

Aesthetic treatments are included as a part of the plans throughout the design process. But, while aesthetics are considered integral to all context sensitive street design processes, there are different degrees of landscaping and street furnishings that may be layered on to the design based on community priorities.

The landscape improvements on the public rights of way may be classified into the following three types:

Garden City "Gateways"

These are targeted locations where travelers first enter the city either from major transportation routes, interstate highways, major state highways, the airport, bus station and future public transportation hubs. The goal of gateway improvements is to create a favorable first impression for those arriving in the community by focusing on landscaped vistas with mature trees and accents of seasonal color.

"We need to 'wow' them at our front door and provide an arrival experience our visitors deserve and expect,"

- Dayton Sherrouse, Augusta Canal Authority

Garden City "Corridors"

These are selected travel routes that may extend from principal Garden City Gateways through the city to key destinations or between such destinations. The corridors will convey a green feeling with periodic medians with mature trees, attractive lighting, and nearly continuous green zones (well-landscaped or grassed areas within the right-of-way), bordered by landscaped street yards on adjoining private properties.

Garden City "Highlight Areas"

These are specific contained public sites such as islands, short medians, bump-outs, street corners, planters, monuments, markers, and the like where well maintained public landscaping of shrubs and seasonal color punctuate the driving experience.

These landscape areas may have to be largely provided for by private sector donation and non-profit organization grant assistance.

Figure 2-57. Garden City Gateways, Corridors and Landscape Highlight areas

Related Beautification Recommendations

The proposed Context Sensitive Solutions approach, coupled with a Roadway Beautification program, will address the public portion of Augusta's gateways and corridors. Private sector actions such as better landscaping, shielded lighting, and attractive signage should be pursued in order to achieve improvement of the 'view from the road'.

This Agenda intends on making Augusta, as the Garden City, a model for best practices in Georgia. An express way to do this, is within the purpose statement of the tree ordinance, propose a goal of **Zero-Net-Tree-Loss**, or even a net increase of 10% per decade, in the urbanized area. This will also further lend support to Augusta's Community Greenspace Program, adopted in 2002.

Augusta has numerous sets of guidelines and recommendations that should be modified to meet to desired objectives of an overall "Realizing the Garden City" program along and within its roadways.

City-Wide ...

• Integrate **Low Impact Development** standards into city documents as they undergo revisions, such as the Street and Road Technical Manual (commercial landscaping requirement updates) and the Public Works Standards (support the use of trees as watershed protectors).

• Update signage standards.

• An enhanced **Tree Protection Plan** should be required during the Development Plan submittal phase for both residential and commercial properties.

High quality signage at Surrey Center at North Augusta

Garden City Corridors ...

• A **Landscaping Overlay Zone** for "Garden City Corridor" segments should be enacted that includes specifications such as landscaping, street design, street trees, utility locations and signage. Change street yard dimensions and commercial set-back requirements, as they are instrumental to changing the view from the road along Garden City Corridors. This augments the city's current commercial landscaping standards.

• Create an inventory map of **Scenic Views** along the Garden City Corridors to be taken into consideration during the development approval process as a potential secondary conservation resource.

Existing landscape "Highlight Area" in North Augusta

Commercial Areas ...

In order to "Realize the Garden City," improved landscaping standards for existing commercial development is crucial. Current commercial tree regulations require 10% green space and one large tree for every 40 feet of linear street frontage. These standards, if complied with, would go a long way to improve the character of the region. However, these requirements apply only to new developments. So, in areas where under-utilized or obsolete commercial properties line the roadways, new trees and street yards come into being very slowly and only here and there as properties turn over.

Currently the ordinance applies only in the case of major building expansion. This Agenda recommends that the ordinance be applied in more moderate expansion scenarios and also be applied when ownership of the parcel changes, in order to make the landscape updates as part of the real estate transaction cost; when the cost of renovations are great. Further details appear in Appendix 2.

Well landscaped commercial entrance in North Augusta

Well landscaped commercial entrance in North Augusta

"There is an overwhelming swell of support in the private sector to beautify our city."

- Barry White, President and CEO of the Augusta Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Promoting Neighborhood Enhancement and Revitalization

Distressed housing in Laney Walker

Smart Growth is a mechanism for the re-integration of struggling neighborhoods back into a successful community, primarily by providing better housing and job opportunities for residents. While residential neighborhoods are found in all parts of Augusta, this Agenda's focus in on the suburban and urban parts of the city, where the need is the greatest.

Augusta's Inner-Ring Neighborhoods

This Agenda builds on current city policies to promote infill housing as a Smart Growth land development practice in Augusta's Urban and Suburban areas. A key aspect of this sustainable strategy makes use of existing infrastructure and strives to connect communities isolated from one another.

Some suburban housing stock needs assistance in the form of stronger community associations

Suburban Augusta

The area between Spirit Creek and Wrightsboro Road is generally characterized by suburban, auto-oriented development: vast residential areas ranging from traditional subdivisions to trailer parks.

Most of the Priority Projects in this Agenda are flanked by existing neighborhoods, including the three on the south side of the proposed Priority Development District. Generally, the neighborhoods that surround this corridor have languished as decades of suburban sprawl have swept over them.

In particular, these neighborhoods would benefit from enhancement of their existing housing stock, stronger community associations, and additional quality control standards for new subdivisions.

Some urban housing stock has fallen into disrepair

Urban Augusta

Built around the downtown and the city's historic areas, the urban core is typified by dense, interconnected neighborhoods, laid out on a grid pattern, that are walkable and prominently landscaped. These neighborhoods generally have easier access to entertainment, goods, services, education, parks, and other amenities.

Housing unit types range from historic, boulevard-adjacent town homes in Olde Town to stately single-family homes in Summerville to downtown loft apartments above ground floor retail shops to the modest bungalows and worker houses of Laney Walker and Harrisburg. Despite their architectural charm, many of these older homes do not meet modern housing demands for size and floor plan flexibility, contributing to the fact that entire neighborhoods have fallen into disrepair.

Upper Broad Street, with its collection of worker housing, might be a location for targeted assistance

Strategic Recommendations

This Agenda recommends three specific areas of action, each with its own set of strategies for neighborhood improvements.

This Agenda suggests five priority investment strategies for neighborhood improvements, discussed in the following pages:

- **Improve quality of existing housing stock**

- Improve quality of existing neighborhood character.

- **Expand available resources** to transform distressed neighborhoods with sustainable, mixed-income housing.

- **Link neighborhoods to schools, recreation and other community amenities.**

- **Improve effectiveness of Neighborhood Associations.**

Each is described in further detail on the following pages.

Improving Owner Occupied Housing

Strategy One...

Provide grants and training for basic rehab of lower-valued homes of needy, long-term homeowners.

Homeowners may experience difficulty maintaining their homes, particularly lower income residents and the elderly on a fixed income. Many residents simply don't know how, cannot afford, or are physically unable to perform home improvements themselves. Assistance for low-income homeowners and property owners to improve existing housing includes rehabilitation grants and emergency repair programs. Community organizations need to become familiar with the available programs and educate property owners about them so they can take advantage of the available resources.

Strategy Two...

Recruit additional homeownership to neighborhoods showing signs of decline through financial assistance in targeted locations.

Target down payment and closing cost assistance, potential home buyers education activities, and subsidized mortgages to targeted locations needing additional homeowner demand.

See Appendix 2 for additional information on updates to building code ordinances through energy efficiency standards and historic preservation.

15th Street, originally worker housing

A residential block in Harrisburg

Improving Renter Occupied Housing

Strategy One...

Ensure quality rental property management.

Issues with poor owner-maintenance of rental properties can rapidly deteriorate the quality of neighborhood.

Standards for housing maintenance (including property appearance and cleanliness) should be even-handedly enforced. This Agenda recommends that Augusta **enforce property maintenance codes** and monitor the diligence of rental property owners in maintaining property by encouraging neighborhood-supportive occupancy in their tenants (zero tolerance of illegal activity, excessive noise, maintenance of yard and parking areas, etc.). Then, this Agenda recommends that Augusta **maintain an inventory of violations** and discourage property owners that chronically fail to comply from purchasing additional properties in the community.

Effective monitoring will require diligent cooperation between homeowners' associations and law enforcement to encourage rental property owners to comply with these standards. Many times, a small handful of property owners are determined to be contributing to a large percentage of the problem. Encourage these owners that are having difficulty in achieving these standards to **utilize quality professional property managers**.

Strategy Two...

Encourage non-profit/civic ownership of rental properties in difficult neighborhoods.

In neighborhoods where negligent landlords are acquiring large numbers of rental properties, target efforts of non-profit and civic housing entities to acquire and properly operate and maintain rental housing. This targeting would include giving priority for public and civic rental housing financial assistance to support the efforts of these non-profit/civic entities.

Well maintained home in Summerville

Well maintained home in Urban Augusta

Improve quality of existing neighborhood character

Another threat to neighborhoods with lower than usual home values is the conversion of residential properties or of formerly community-serving retail facilities to potentially neighborhood character damaging uses. This needs to be carefully monitored to assure that inappropriate uses do not creep into the community, especially along the highly-visible arterial-fronting properties that border the neighborhood. This Agenda recommends that if conversion of retail properties to non-retail commercial uses becomes essential due to market conditions, standards of operation and site maintenance (landscaping, screening) need to be maintained that support the value of the neighborhood.

Augusta can also increase existing neighborhood property values by strategically planting shade trees in yards and along the public streets, and walk ways in existing subdivisions.

See Appendix 2 for more details on a neighborhood tree planting program and updates to the Tree Ordinance for new subdivisions.

Expand available resources to transform distressed neighborhoods with sustainable, mixed-income housing.

Through the recently enacted "Restoring American Financial Stability Act of 2010", there are over $1 billion worth of funds, of which, Georgia has an allocation. This Agenda recommends that Augusta continue to aggressively pursue all potential state, federal, civic, and private funding for affordable housing. For example:

• The Georgia Neighborhood Stabilization Program provides assistance to local governments in purchasing abandoned and foreclosed properties for conversion into low and moderate income housing.

• Augusta should seek General Assembly approval in the upcoming FY2011 budget year for the Augusta Housing Trust Fund to dedicate existing taxes and/or fees to serve as a reoccurring revenue source for the fund.

• Another possibility is to create a modest local tax on property transfer or document filings, to ease the burden on private sector and community stakeholder contributions, until existing tax dedication permissions can be acquired.

• HUD's new Choice Neighborhoods program is going to be an increasing important as a source of funding.

Downtown bus transfer station

Link neighborhoods to schools, recreation, and other community amenities.

Many of the city's subdivisions are insolated in a way that separates them from their fellow subdivision residents. Improving access to adjoining subdivisions, convenience shopping, and employment and school destinations will further stabilize a revitalizing neighborhood. Neighborhood parks and open space amenities also promote small business development. New developments should be required to enhance the areas street network and connectivity with the surrounding fabric.

Existing neighborhood's social structures can be supported and reinforced through connection to community resources such as schools, parks, libraries, and other gathering places. Research has found that suburban homes located within 600 feet of a neighborhood park, regardless of size, were often worth 20% or more than homes located more than a half-mile away from a park.

Improve open space connections:

Improved pedestrian and bike connections to Augusta's recreation resources as a method to increase values in targeted neighborhoods.

That Augusta commit to a long-term, Comprehensive Open Space Plan to positively influence quality of life, increase property values, and have an advantage over other cities when recruiting and retaining its neighborhood businesses.

Improve transportation connections:

Improved public transportation service, particularly along this Agenda Priority Development District, as a way to increase values in targeted neighborhoods.

Pendleton King Park

Wilkinson Gardens Elementary School

Improve school connections:

The HUD Choice Neighborhoods program, the follow-up to the successful HOPE VI program for affordable housing recognizes the benefit in linking housing improvements with appropriate community services, schools, transportation, and access to jobs.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are sustained efforts by parents, schools, community leaders and local, state, and federal governments to improve the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school.

SRTS programs examine conditions around schools and conduct projects and activities that work to improve safety and accessibility, and reduce traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. As a result, these programs help make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation choices thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age[21].

---

21   Safe Routes to School. http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/getting_started/what_is_srts.cfm

This Agenda recommends that the Richmond County School System collaborate with city leaders to incorporate both Smart Growth principles and key recommendations of this Agenda during their master facility planning process. School siting affects traffic congestion, air pollution, school transportation budgets, and childhood health and obesity. New school investments are of particularly strategic importance because of their almost immediate impact on local growth patterns, which can serve to highly benefit the economic and social structure of the surrounding neighborhood if aligned with a comprehensive vision.

In line with this Agenda, particularly in the South Gate Urban Village and Oates Creek Neighborhood Revitalization Priority Project areas, the Richmond County School System has a unique opportunity to use its education dollars to fulfill both academic considerations and to express the values and vision of the surrounding community in supporting the area's revitalization.

Improve Effective Neighborhood Associations

However, this strategy set will not have the desired effect if communities aren't supported at a base, grass-roots level. Therefore, this Agenda recommends utilizing the expertise of both civic organizations and the residential real estate community to sustain, expand, and / or **create effective neighborhood associations** in all neighborhoods, but particularly those in the inner-ring where priority investment strategies have been targeted.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Organizational Approach

The issue at hand is how to encourage, organize and manage the various potential 'champions', both in the public and the private sector to achieve the best results.

Even if this Agenda is implemented only in part, assuming those projects and policies are done well, they will have a very dramatic and positive impact on the future development of the city.

Today, Augusta does not have the in-house capability to oversee execution of this Agenda. While the City has a designated Redevelopment Authority, that body is neither funded nor staffed. The current Downtown and Richmond County Development Authorities have neither the mandate, nor the resources to undertake these projects. City Departments, while potential partners, are not organized to follow through comprehensively on this Agenda. Four new positions or entities are recommended to address these shortcomings.

Leadership

It is within the context described above that a fresh approach is offered. Several possible organizational models were investigated and discussed with the project's Steering Committee and potential private participants. These interactions resulted in development of a preferred model for the implementation of the Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (ASDA), which is described on the following pages.

Steering Committee

This is a bold Agenda, requiring adequate staffing, funding, as well as both public and private support, in order to move forward on several fronts simultaneously.

The implementation strategy recognizes that Leadership responsibility ultimately rests with the City Commissioners, with input from the mayor and with specific activities managed by the City Administrator's office. Key recommendations include creation of:

• A city-wide citizen **Steering Committee**, which taps the talents of key persons already involved in the creation of this Agenda, and others to be designated by the Commissioners based on recommendations from the leadership community. This Task Force would report directly to the Commissioners.

• A new **Office of Implementation** to carry out the recommendations and decisions of this Agenda Steering Committee. This will be a fully funded office with a Director, support staff and adequate funding to carry forth its mandates.

• A new organization, "**Sustainable Augusta**", similar to Augusta Tomorrow, responsible for oversight of projects and activities identified in this Agenda which lie outside Augusta Tomorrow's area of interest as identified in the 2009 Westobou Vision master plan.

• The **Augusta Civic Realty Trust**, a private sector entity with critical financial capability and development skills that can serve as a "front end" catalyst for difficult projects.

"Figure 2-58. ASDA Organizational Chart for Project Development" on page 2-151 graphically illustrates these relationships. Roles and responsibilities of each are discussed in further detail below.

This group would be appointed by and report to the Commissioners in order to encourage direct involvement of the Commissioners in the positive outcome of this Agenda effort. The group should be relatively compact – with a membership from 7 to 11 persons representative of the business and community leadership of the City – with a strong chairperson who will be a primary stakeholder in the effort. Although this steering committee would have some aspects in common with the larger group that has served as the steering committee for development of this Agenda plan, it is envisioned that this Agenda Steering Committee would be more action-oriented and would provide direction and reinforcement to the development effort and this Agenda Development Director as defined below.

Oversight
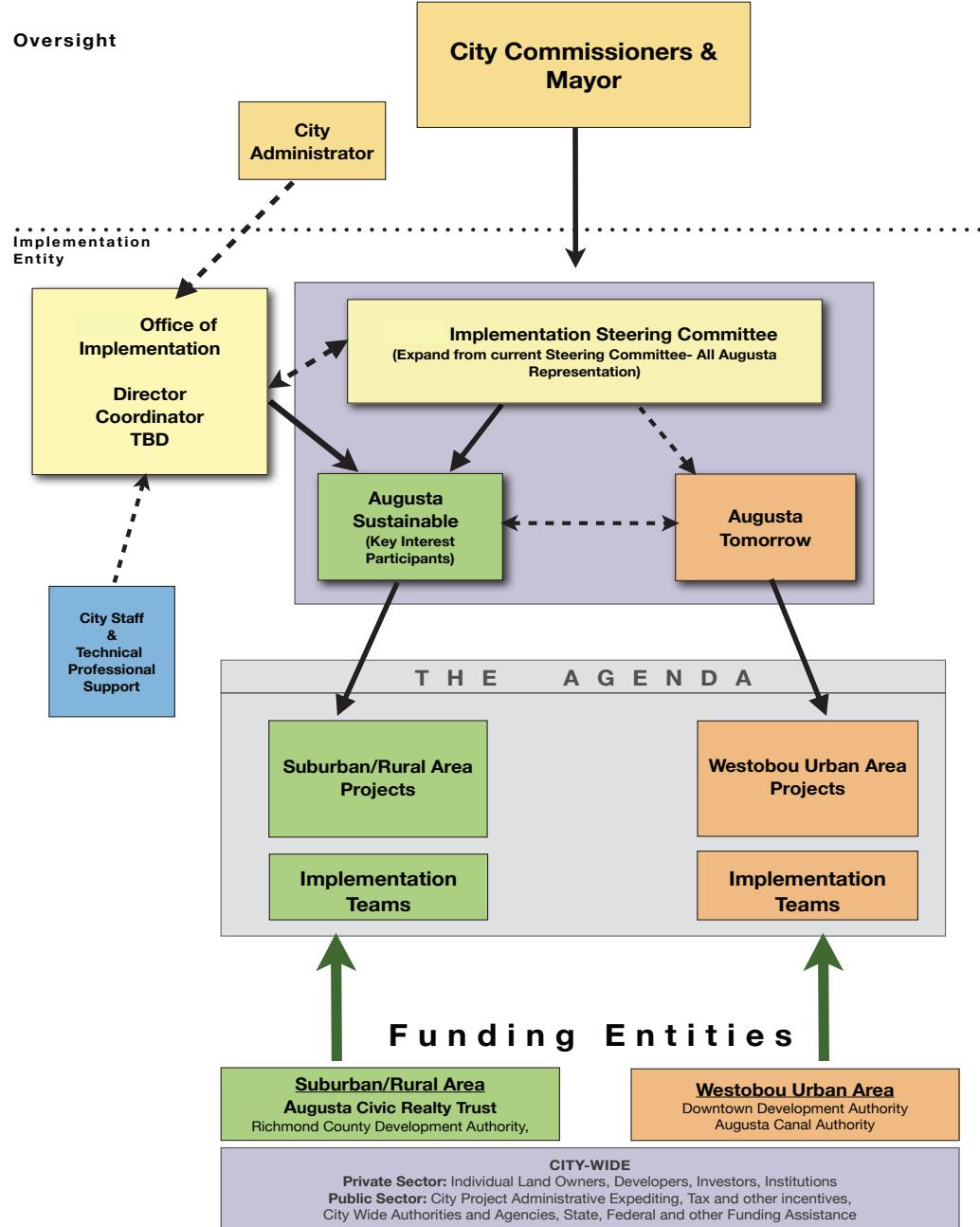
Figure 2-58. *Organizational Chart for Project Development*

The Office of Implementation

This Agenda calls for the creation of an Office of Implementation, headed by a Development Director. This person must be a strong, knowledgeable, dedicated and well organized person who can bring the essential continuous focus to push the defined priority projects forward, to "track" and "facilitate" progress from day-to-day, and to achieve coordination of the various elements of this Agenda initiative.

This office will work in close collaboration with two entities whose purpose is to advocate, develop and oversee individual projects in their respective parts of the City, Augusta Tomorrow and Augusta Sustainable. The Office of Implementation will focus its efforts over the first few years on work in support of the "Augusta Sustainable" efforts.

Additionally the Development Director would be charged with accomplishing interagency coordination both within the City and with external agencies and entities. This position would directly report to the City Administrator from day-to-day and would be subject to

oversight on a regular basis from this Agenda Steering Committee. The influence of the Development Director would be proportional to the entrepreneurial capabilities of the individual and the effectiveness of the relationships with other Augusta entities.

The Director should understand real estate and project development, be able to identify and procure project-based public funding, and have the ability to coordinate multiple agencies, disciplines, and interest groups. It is assumed that the work of this office would be aided by cooperative input from other city departments, particularly Planning, as well as by outside consultants.

Augusta Sustainable

The recommended implementation approach assumes creation of a sister organization to Augusta Tomorrow, i.e. "Augusta Sustainable", to push forward projects in the areas outside that defined in the 2009 Westobou Urban Area Plan. Augusta Sustainable would be an advisory group on implementation of items resulting from the Sustainable Development Agenda.

This group would be made up of key business, church and community leaders with activities generally below Wrightsboro Road, and also generally drawn from this Agenda Implementation Steering Committee, as well as key actors and interest groups associated with the Priority Projects.

Augusta Sustainable would support implementation of the Agenda in a number of ways, including:

• Advocate regulatory and policy initiatives recommended in this Agenda plan.

• Form implementation teams to support and steer the individual Priority Projects.

• Support broad community-wide sustainability initiatives in the city.

Augusta Civic Realty Trust (ACRT)

The entities described above have largely advisory, coordination, funding program identification and fund raising roles. Even with considerable public assistance, given the market challenges of many of the areas described in the plan, ACRT, made up largely of civic-minded private citizens, would perform as a development "bridge" entity, or in certain instances as the lead developer, to provide the impetus to get projects moving that otherwise would not.

How it Works

Project Development

Public Side Involvement

City departments and local, state and federal leadership will continue to seek out programs and funding for desired city infrastructure upgrades and services. These would have a particular emphasis on those programs that forward the Augusta Sustainable Design Agenda and its principles. The Office of Implementation will coordinate and collaborate with them.

With the creation of the new entity, Augusta Sustainable, as a sister to Augusta Tomorrow, attention and energy will be applied evenly across the entire city. Augusta Tomorrow will continue to focus on projects identified in the 2009 Westobou Plan. Augusta Sustainable will focus on projects and policy initiatives in the rest of the city.

These two entities would coordinate closely with each other, and the Office of Implementation, particularly around issues of funding (SPLOST, etc.). It is recommended that at least one board member of each group be a board member of the other.

Sustainable Augusta would likely follow the precedent set by Augusta Tomorrow by forming an Implementation Team for each of its projects and policy initiatives.

For the first few years at least, this Agenda Development Director will focus largely on Augusta Sustainable's priority projects, though also coordinating and assisting Westobou urban area projects as needed.

This Agenda Development Director will rely heavily on technical and professional support from city staff, especially the Planning Department and Housing and Development Department, as well as outside consulting services in several critical areas, particularly urban design, economic development and related Context Sensitive Solutions for transportation projects.

A key aspect of this approach is a strong role for this Agenda Implementation Steering Committee in overseeing the work of both "Augusta Sustainable" and a strong and active liaison with "Augusta Tomorrow". It is assumed that the Steering Committee will meet monthly to hear and act on reports from the Office of Implementation on each of the projects and policy initiatives.

For each project, public involvement will be critical, to insure that citizen inputs inform the implementation and that the overall effort has community support. A spirit of collaboration must be built and sustained. Ideally, a public update would occur annually, coordinated by this Agenda Development Director with support from city agencies, as well as public input to the implementation teams focusing on specific projects and policy initiatives.

Private Sector Involvement

Complimenting these public efforts, this Agenda recommends formation of a new, "bridge", implementing entity the Augusta Civic Realty Trust (ACRT), to be a catalyst for development, intervening to enable progress on many of the priority projects identified in the Plan. An example is the Civic Realty Trust for Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia that assembles and, in some cases, develops properties to achieve community objectives. In general terms, such an entity would have the purpose to enable development of community benefit throughout the Augusta region, with an initial focus on projects identified in the Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (ASDA), which are not part of the Westobou Urban Area Plan.

The capital contributions to form such an entity might be raised from civic-minded developers in Augusta and could be supplemented from like-minded private, non-profit, or public entities. At a minimum, such an entity could acquire land or interests in land in areas with development potential, with the intent to advocate for more effective use and development, in general accordance with the plan, enabling capture of value created through land disposition when development occurs. At a maximum, such an entity could function as an active developer and operator of facilities, although a better emphasis might be to enable others to do the ultimate development and operations, creating value through land assembly and its close relationship to the public sector.

The ACRT entity could be a for-profit venture with the goal to earn a threshold return – perhaps capped at a compounded fixed percentage on contributed equity – above which surplus returns might be diverted to other elements of ASDA or to an affiliated non-profit entity.

One possible funding source for the entity's projects could be Section 108 guaranteed loans from HUD. The limitation on this type of funding would be 5 times the city's annual CDBG allocation, which, for Augusta would be approximately $11 million. Some amount of this cap has already been committed to the Partridge Inn rehabilitation.

Examples of priority projects where such an entity might effectively intervene include:

- Development in the South Gate Mall vicinity (Project #6) to assemble lands and encouraged coordinated mixed use development.

- Assembling properties for development in the Rocky Creek jobs center vicinity (Project #5) in conjunction with creation of the new flood prevention lake and nearby Regency Mall property.

- Coordinated development and parcel assembly as part of the Olive Road neighborhood redevelopment.

That said, many of the projects could be undertaken with little or no outside assistance. In that case, the primary concern is that the work is done in accordance with the principles of the Agenda. This would be handled through the zoning and subdivision approval process.

Next Steps for Project Development

Following approval of the Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda, creation of the three new key public entities would be the first order of business, i.e. the Steering Committee, the Office of Implementation and Augusta Sustainable. Given that Georgia DOT's Fifteenth Street project is gearing up, as is the Rocky Creek flood control project, priority should be given to the Office of Implementation, so that they might be up to date, with positions, recommendations and policies in place in time to get the most benefit from these projects.

Sustainable Augusta members should be selected, briefed by the Office of Implementation, so that they set their year one agenda. Augusta Tomorrow is well underway with their efforts in this regard. This will be particularly important as collaboration on project funding strategies becomes necessary. Concurrently, the Steering Committee members should be selected and a meeting schedule and an agenda developed for the first meeting.

Sustainable Augusta will form Implementation Teams for the highest priority projects identified in this plan. These are assumed to be:

• **Rocky Creek Mixed-Use Development**

• **Southgate Urban Village**

• **Oates Creek Neighborhood Revitalization**

The proposed Civic Realty Trust would be a private initiative and its creation must come from civic-minded interests. The Office of Implementation should encourage and facilitate creation of this group to the extent that it can. This is particularly important for Priority Development District projects, especially at Rocky Creek, and thus has high priority.

Augusta Tomorrow would coordinate closely with the Office of Implementation to accelerate urban area projects that lie within the Priority Development District. These include several market creation projects:

• **St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park**

• **Harrisburg Canal Village**

• **Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood**

• **Marbury Village**

• **Westobou Art Center**

Upper Broad Neighborhood Revitalization and the Sandbar Ferry Road Gateway can become joint Sustainable Augusta and Augusta Tomorrow early action projects.

Policy Development

The way we build the public realm is the single most important determining factor in the long-term health of our cities. This section includes a process for creating consensus around the proposed land development changes in this Agenda.

Public and Private Sector Cooperation

The process to compile the Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda has been relatively short in terms of the work that is needed to move the Agenda forward. Complex ideas with many implications have been presented that need the full consideration of both public and private stakeholders. Changes have been recommended in three primary land development documents:

• Comprehensive Plan

• Zoning Ordinances

• Subdivision Regulations

Although, the Storm Water Ordinance, Tree and Landscaping Illustrated Guide, Road and Street Design Manual, and others have been reviewed as well.

A Round Table Process

Perhaps the best idea is to create a collaborative initiative designed to pull together local government agencies, the development community, neighborhood organizations, home builders, engineering and planning firms, business associations, and environmental and conservation groups to come to consensus on the recommended land development changes.

This Agenda recommends a comprehensive, consensus building, local **Round Table Process** to update land development ordinances with a cross-jurisdictional workgroup. This workgroup would be led by a facilitator or Urban Design professional with the overall objective being to systematically examine Augusta-Richmond County's ordinances with an eye toward promoting more environmentally sensitive and economically viable development practices.

Like a similar process undergone by Carroll County, MD the end goal would be to create **Model Development Principles** that integrate natural resources and better site design[22].

---

22   Recommended Model Development Principles for Carroll County, Maryland: Consensus of the Builders for the Bay Site Planning Round Table. July 2008. This process was supported by the Carroll County Commissioners, the Center for Watershed Protection, and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

Next Steps for Policy Development

This round table process can provide more development community outreach and cross public / private sector discussion than has been feasible in this study. Through this Agenda, Augusta has made a commitment to sustainable development and pro actively encouraging environmentally sensitive developments that will enhance the quality of life for future generations.

Detailed Code Analysis, Months 1 and 2: The recommendations of this Agenda should be incorporated into an internal review of existing regulations conducted by city staff to create a list of topics to be discussed. This analysis should serve as a concise summary of the regulatory barriers to implementing environmentally sensitive site design in Augusta.

Kick Off, Month 3, Findings of the Code Analysis can be introduced to round table members, along with the proposed Round Table Process.

Subcommittee Meetings, Months 4 - 7: The Round Table participants can then divide themselves up into subcommittees reflecting their interests and professional expertise to tackle the identified issues. These committees should be organized around the Smart Growth principles of this Agenda.

Final Recommendations, Month 8: Each subcommittee should report back their recommendations to the City.

Following this initial review process, an **Annual Review** is recommended.

The Five Year Workplan

Taken together, these eleven projects can elevate the quality of life for all of Augusta. This is a big Agenda, spanning two decardes or more. The following chart summarizes conceptual costs broken down by public and private sector obligations.

The suggested combination time frame for these projects is shown in "Figure 2-59. Five Year Workplan" on page 2-159. Note that each individual project is highly dependent on the economic climate, but that the market and the motivation of individual champions can assist.

This Agenda does place highest priority on starting the projects within this Agenda Priority Development District (#5b, Rocky Creek; #6a, Southgate; #7a, Oates Creek), followed by the two projects that connect to the Westobou Vision Urban Area Plan (#7b, Upper Broad; #8a Sandbar Ferry).

The Agenda suggests that the City work closely so as to balance these projects with those identified in the Westobou Vision. Five of that plan's Market Creation Projects lie within this Agenda Priority Development District's northside (Harrisburg Village, Marbury Village, St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park, Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood and the Westobou Arts Center). These should be given equal prorirty to those projects in the southside.
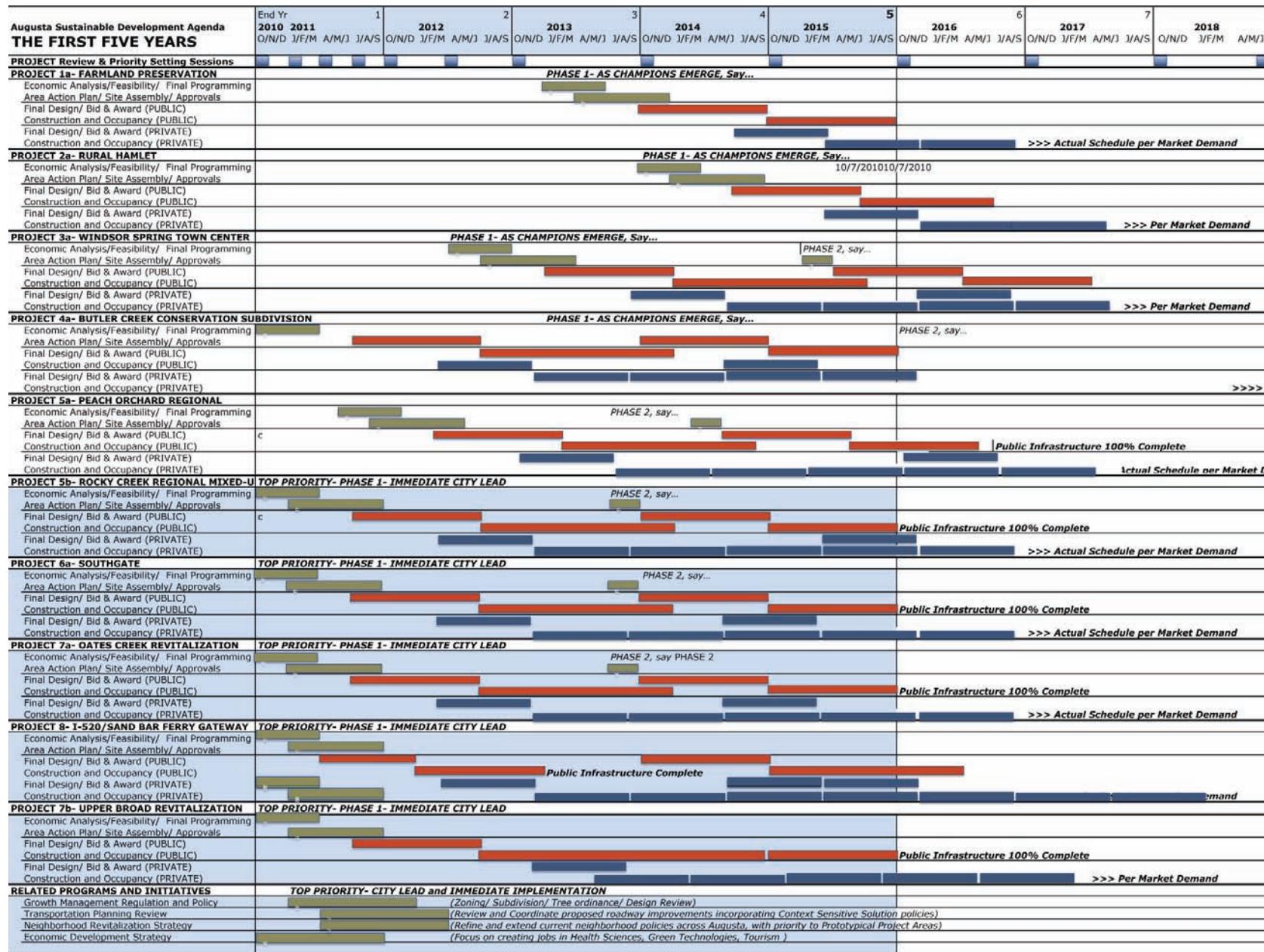
Figure 2-59. Five Year Workplan

What will it cost?

This is a big plan and its implementation will take at least two decades. Conceptual cost estimates were developed for each of the eleven Prototype Projects. These total over $1.1 billion in public and private investment, hopefully with the bulk of it occurring in the next decade. In addition, there are the Westobou Market Creation Projects, which were estimated also at well over a billion dollars.

Prototype Projects Total

As seen in "Figure 2-60. ASDA Projects Cost Summary Chart" on page 2-161, of the $1.1 billion for the eleven new projects, nearly $881 billion (79.8%) is privately financed. Approximately $150 million (13.6%) is for public infrastructure. Another $73 million (6.6%) would be in the form of public financing as incentives for desired private initiatives. This represents a 4:1 return on public funds invested, before considering the greater public good of many of these projects.

High Priority Projects Total

Looking at the southside of this Agenda Priority Development District (Wrightsboro Road to Rocky Creek), which includes three project areas (#5b Rocky Creek, #6a Southgate, and #7a Oates Creek), the total cost is nearly $420 million. Approximately $269 million would be privately financed, with $92 million for public infrastructure, another $59 million (6.6%) of public financing assistance.

This represents a 3:1 return on public funds invested, before considering that most of these projects serve the greater public good. Examples include the Rocky Creek Flood Control project, properly building the "Augusta Way" boulevard and making significant improvements to the Gordon Highway.

Individual project costs are summarized in the chart on the next page.

Summary-ASDA Prototype Projects

	Total Residential (DU)	Total Commercial (SF)	Public Infrastructure Investment	Public Financing for Development	Private $	Cost Totals
1a Fall Line Farm						
	70	500	$3,175,000	$0	$20,852,560	$24,027,560
	% of Total		13.2%	0.0%	86.8%	100%
2a Spirit Creek Hamlet						
	164	10,000	$1,550,000	$0	$46,666,855	$48,216,855
	% of Total		3.2%	0.0%	96.8%	100%
3a Windor Spring Town Center						
	893	26,000	$12,737,500	$5,627,496	$173,116,361	$191,481,357
	% of Total		6.7%	2.9%	90.4%	100%
3b Belair Town Center						
	300	180,000	$3,925,000	$1,999,242	$76,416,773	$82,341,015
	% of Total		4.8%	2.4%	92.8%	100%
4a Butler Creek						
	574	0	$21,590,625	$198,338	$165,252,325	$187,041,287
	% of Total		11.5%	0.1%	88.4%	100%
5a Peach Orchard Regional Retail Center						
	144	210,000	$5,425,000	$1,732,676	$55,091,713	$62,249,389
	% of Total		8.7%	2.8%	88.5%	100%
5b Rocky Creek Park Mixed-Use Center						
	370	1,250,000	$49,410,000	$7,104,449	$141,675,121	$198,189,570
	% of Total		24.9%	3.6%	71.5%	100%
6a Southgate Urban Village						
	270	190,000	$19,720,000	$13,035,000	$37,152,814	$69,907,814
	% of Total		28.2%	18.6%	53.1%	100%
7a Oates Creek Neighborhood Revitalization						
	900	12,000	$22,625,000	$39,041,420	$90,060,500	$151,726,920
	% of Total		14.9%	25.7%	59.4%	100%
7b Upper Broad Street Neighborhood Revitaliztion						
	240	28,000	$8,330,000	$4,220,622	$63,283,848	$75,834,470
	% of Total		11.0%	5.6%	83.4%	100%
8a I-520/Sand Bar Ferry "Garden City" Gateway						
	0	150,000	$1,587,500	$215,000	$11,287,500	$13,090,000
	% of Total		12.1%	1.6%	86.2%	100%
TOTALS						
CITY WIDE	3,925	2,056,500	$150,075,625	$73,174,243	$880,856,368	$1,104,106,236
	% of Total		13.6%	6.6%	79.8%	100%
IN PRIORITY CORRIDOR	1,540	1,452,000	91,755,000	59,180,869	268,888,435	419,824,304
Southside Only- Projects 5b/ 6a/ 7a)	% of Total		21.9%	14.1%	64.0%	100%

High Priority Projects (Southside of ASDA Priority Development District) (brace covering 5b, 6a, 7a)
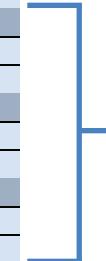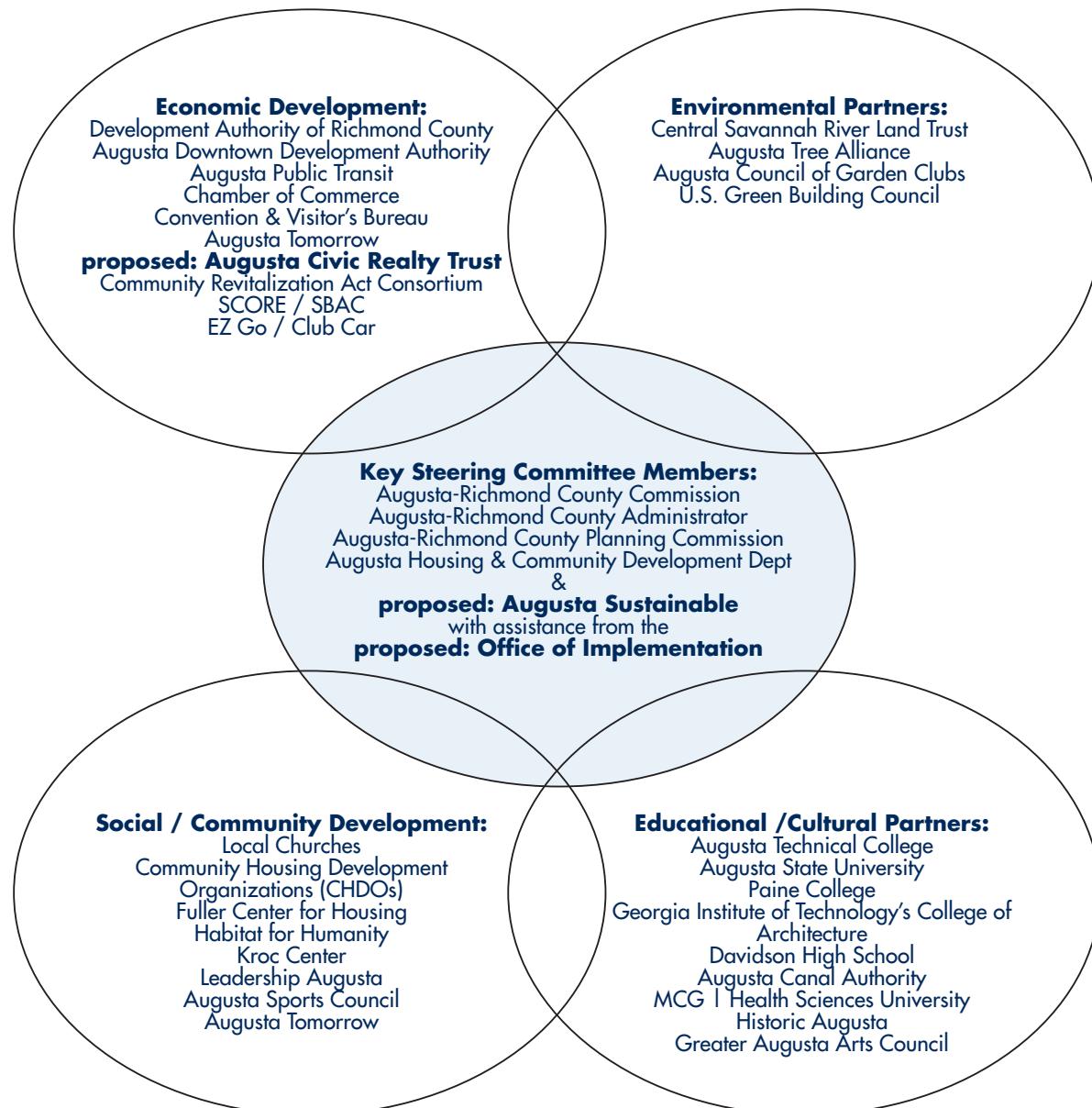
Figure 2-60. ASDA Projects Cost Summary Chart

Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

"This Agenda intends to forge relationships across the City that heretofore have been siloed. So, simply the coordination among the key steering members creates unprecedented opportunities for capacity building and knowledge sharing. For one of the first times in the City's history, master-planning of a major Priority Development Corridor will be carried out through a systems based approach integrating transportation, housing, land planning, economic development and environmental stewardship. But that's only part of the story. Partnerships in the project broaden beyond the Steering Committee group to include entities involved in economic development, the environment, education, and community advocacy"[1].

Coordinating these partnerships is crucial to Realizing the Garden City.

---

1   From the DOT TIGER II / HUD Community Planning Challenge Grant Submittal for the Augusta Sustainable Development Implementation Program. Augusta, GA. 2010.

Economic Development:
Development Authority of Richmond County
Augusta Downtown Development Authority
Augusta Public Transit
Chamber of Commerce
Convention & Visitor's Bureau
Augusta Tomorrow
proposed: Augusta Civic Realty Trust
Community Revitalization Act Consortium
SCORE / SBAC
EZ Go / Club Car

Environmental Partners:
Central Savannah River Land Trust
Augusta Tree Alliance
Augusta Council of Garden Clubs
U.S. Green Building Council

Key Steering Committee Members:
Augusta-Richmond County Commission
Augusta-Richmond County Administrator
Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission
Augusta Housing & Community Development Dept
&
proposed: Augusta Sustainable
with assistance from the
proposed: Office of Implementation

Social / Community Development:
Local Churches
Community Housing Development
Organizations (CHDOs)
Fuller Center for Housing
Habitat for Humanity
Kroc Center
Leadership Augusta
Augusta Sports Council
Augusta Tomorrow

Educational /Cultural Partners:
Augusta Technical College
Augusta State University
Paine College
Georgia Institute of Technology's College of Architecture
Davidson High School
Augusta Canal Authority
MCG | Health Sciences University
Historic Augusta
Greater Augusta Arts Council

Figure 2-61. Potential Partnerships for the Augusta Sustainable Development Implementation Program

A Final Note

The single largest task facing the implementation effort is to build a spirit and a culture of cooperation and collaboration among public and private sectors and interests.

This effort begins with the three most critical projects, Rocky Creek; Southgate and Oates Creek, all of which have potential champions and initial funding sources, and the most critical policy changes, all of which have the potential to assist Augusta in better using public and private investment to support the long-term health of its economy, its environment, and its citizens.

Team

shieldsDESIGN LLC
John R. Shields, Principal-In-Charge
A. Rae Smith, Project Urban Designer

Cranston Engineering Group, P.C.
Thomas H. Robertson, Transportation, Civil and
Regulatory

exclamation101
Andrew Young, Graphic Design Consultant

F.M. Costantino Inc
Frank Costantino, Architectural Rendering

ICON Architecture, Inc.
Jonathan S. Lane, Organizational Consultant

The Woodhurst Partnership
Bob Woodhurst, Architect
Robert S. Woodhurst, Associate Architect

Urban Partners
James E. Hartling, Economic Consultant

with

City of Augusta
George Patty, Planning Commission Executive
Director
Paul DeCamp, Planning Director

shieldsDESIGN — Architecture Planning Urban Design

Advisory Task Force Members

This Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda
could not have been developed without the
input and efforts of the Advisory Task Force,
chaired by Terry D. Elam, President of Augusta
Technical College.

- Rick Acree, Public Services Department
- Michael Ash, Vice President of Administration, MCG | Georgia Health Sciences University
- Tanya Barnhill, Total Media Consultant
- Tom Beck, Parks and Recreation Department
- William Bloodworth, President of Augusta State University
- Braye Boardman, President of Beacon Blue
- Bill Boatman, Meybohm Realtors
- Rick Brady, Acura of Augusta
- Cread Brown, Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Sam Booher, Augusta Sierra Club Co-Chair
- Patricia Booker, CSRA Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy
- Jennifer Bowen, Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Robert Buchwitz, Mayor of Hephzibah
- Nadia Butler, President & CEO of ESi
- Frank Carl, Augusta Ports Authority

- Jerry Cole, Retired Minister
- Hugh Connolly, Citizen
- Robert Cooks, Augusta Neighborhood Improvement Corporation
- Zack Daffin, Vice President of Business Development, Georgia Bank and Trust
- Ratesh Daggubati, Senior Software Analyst
- Stanley DeHoff, Executive Director of the Georgia Medical Center Authority
- William Dozier, Senior Vice President of Residential Property Management at Coldwell Banker
- Walter Dukes, Regional Vice President of Georgia Power Company
- Randy Duteau, Augusta Sports Council
- Jerry Dye, Attorney
- John Engler, McKnight Properties, Inc
- David Fields, Vice President of Radio Cab
- Henry Frishknecht, Arborist
- Butch Gallop, Gallop & Associates Consulting Group
- Theresa Gant, East Augusta Neighborhood Association
- Yvonne Gentry, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- Charlotte Ginn, Another Chance Ministries
- Drew Goins, Utilities Department

Augusta
"Realizing the Garden City"